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## ON THE NAMES OF THE *REFRÁN*

IN Spain, the popular proverb has always occupied a place of honor on all levels of culture. Its popularity is attested by the literature of the country. It appears in the *Cid* and from that time forward there is almost no type of literature, and for many centuries scarcely an author, in which it is not found. During the Middle Ages, it was called by a wealth of names not duplicated in other European languages. It would seem that these names tell us much about the medieval man's attitude toward his proverbs, and may even throw some light on the vexing question of the nature of the proverb itself. The object of this paper is to consider these various names, indicating in a general way how long they served, pointing out certain interesting factors which they have in common, and trying to show some reasons why *refrán* gradually replaced all the others.

From time to time admirers of the *refrán*, such as Sbarbi,<sup>1</sup> Rodríguez Marín,<sup>2</sup> and Cotarelo,<sup>3</sup> have discussed the names of the popular proverb, and advanced opinions on the etymology of the word *refrán*. Since the study of the proverb seems to be having another renaissance, it appears worth while to evaluate and expand the observations of these scholars.

We shall first summarize Cotarelo's article, which, as the most recent, includes the findings of his predecessors. He discusses the following names and determines the approximate dates of their appearance:

1. proverbio
2. fablilla (fabiella, fabriella, fabrilla, fabla, habla) (ca. 1200)

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Sbarbi, *Monografía sobre los refranes*, Madrid, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> F. Rodríguez Marín, *Los refranes*, an address delivered in Sevilla in 1895. Published 1926, as an introduction to his *Más de 21.000 refranes castellanos*.

<sup>3</sup> E. Cotarelo y Mori, "Refrán," *BRAE*, 1917, IV, 242-259.

3. palabra (paraula) (ca. 1250)
4. viesso (verso) (ca. 1250)
5. verbo (vierbo) (ca. 1270)
6. ejemplo (exemplo, ejiemplo, enxiemplo, enxenplo) (1326) <sup>4</sup>
7. retraire (retrayre, retraere) (ca. 1250) <sup>4</sup>
8. patraña (ca. 1350)
9. parlilla (ca. 1350).

He suggests as a possible first appearance of the word *refrán*, with its modern connotation, the title affixed to the collection of *Refranes que dizen las viejas tras el huego*, attributed to the Marqués de Santillana (d. 1458). For those who, like himself, may question this attribution, he furnishes another example, from the *Cancionero de Herberay*, which he dates about 1470. Finally, he accepts as the etymon of the word itself the French *refrain*, which, he indicates, is found in Spain as *refrán*, with its modern French connotation, sometime before the composition of the *Siete Partidas* (ca. 1270). The critic states his belief—"así pudiera asegurarse"—that the name gradually became attached to the popular proverb because of its formal resemblance to the metrical *refrain*, a rhymed couplet used to close each of a series of stanzas.

The "little gospel" of Spanish philosophy had actually been christened *refrán* more than a century before the date set by Cotarello. Strangely enough, although it was later to be applied exclusively to the popular proverb, on its first appearance, in the anonymous *Gran Conquista de Ultramar*, probably, of the early fourteenth century, perhaps earlier, it is attached to a rather learned saying:

El *refran* viejo dice, e es bien verdad, que mas vale perder la cabeza en honra que non vivir luengo tiempo en cautiverio.<sup>5</sup>

The name does not reappear until the following century. In the translation of John Gower's *Confessio amantis* made by Juan de Cuenca about 1400 we read:

E esto es cosa que mucho agravia mi voluntad porque dise el *refran* que el mucho mirar fase los ladrones verdaderos.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> These dates are amended below.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. P. de Gayangos, *BAE*, XLIV, 206b. There is a possibility that in this case the word *refrán* may have been substituted for another proverb name when the ms. was revised in the XVI century.

<sup>6</sup> *Confesión del amante*, lib. V, ed. E. Birch-Hirschfeld, Leipzig, 1909, p. 319. There can be no doubt as to the meaning of the word; it is a direct translation of the English: "And that me greveth wonder sore, / For this *proverb* is ever newe, / That stronge lockes maken trewe / Of hem that wolden stele and pike." (Ed. R. Pauli, London, 1857, II, 351.)



Johan Enríquez (fl. ca. 1425) attaches the name to a more popular form:

Senyora, con vos porfia  
non quiero porque diran  
este antiguo *refran*:  
a quien dan no escogeria.<sup>7</sup>

In an unpublished manuscript of Juan de Dueñas, dated 1438, the name designates what is indisputably a *refrán*:

Mas como dize el *refran*  
callen barbas, fablen cartas.<sup>8</sup>

The *Libro de las veynte cartas e quisiones* of Fernando de la Torre, which appeared not long after 1449,<sup>9</sup> contains no fewer than eight examples of the word, as used by Torre and his correspondents. To cite a few:

. . . Desir con mucha rason e verdad . . . el grosero *refran* castellano que dise: de al me vengue dios sy no de pastor, agua y nieve. (P. 40.)

One "Maestro e ministro de la Trinidad de Valladolid" writes to Torre:

No en valde viejo *refran* al pecador es dado por consejo: mas vale bueno por fuerça que malo de grado. (P. 28.)<sup>10</sup>

Torre's good friend Alvaro de Zamora also uses the name:

. . . Podemos dezir el viejo *refran* que alla se usa por los que en ella [i.e., la religion] entran, que dexan fanbre e frio por amor de Dios. (P. 82.)

The name appears quite consistently in the *cancionero* poets. It appears often in Gómez Manrique, Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Pinar, and others of the courtly school. The one surprising omission

<sup>7</sup> *El cancionero de Palacio*, ed. F. Vendrell de Millás, Barcelona, 1945, p. 263.

<sup>8</sup> *Pleyto . . . que ovo J. de D. e su amiga*, Bib. Nac. Madrid, ms. 19158, fol. 198. In the same composition, above, we read: "Este contrato otorgado fue en el noveno mes del año de nueve cientos y quinientos e ocho que non an olvidado treynta mas."

<sup>9</sup> *Cancionero y obras en prosa*, ed. A. Paz y Melia, Dresden, 1907. The editor speaks of a dedication dated 1446 (Intr., vi-vii), which does not, however, appear in his text. Though the collection may have been begun much earlier, it includes one letter dated "a diez dias de março de quarenta e nueve" (p. 127).

<sup>10</sup> This letter must be dated 1449-1455, as another *Respuesta* to this *Quision* was written by "el maestro [D. Alfonso] de Madrigal e maestrescuela de Salamanca." As Paz y Melia notes, the famous "Tostado" was given the Salamanca post by Juan II in 1449. He died in 1455.

in the list of those who used the new name early in the fifteenth century is the genial Arcipreste de Talavera, who, in his *Corbacho* (1438), used *refranes* so generously and so well. This omission is the more surprising inasmuch as Talavera had close ties with both Aragon, from which region the new name appears to have reached Castile, and the group of courtly poets who did so much to popularize it.

By a little after the middle of the century the term *refran* is commonly, almost exclusively, used to designate the popular proverb. The earlier wealth of names has dwindled to two. And *proverbio*, in spite of an occasional identification with the popular proverb throughout the course of later centuries, comes, with the Marques de Santillana,<sup>11</sup> to represent a learned type of didactic proverb. As the popular proverb establishes itself more and more firmly in literature, from the later *cancionero* poets down through the *Celestinas* and the picaresque novel to Cervantes, it gradually discards its other names in favor of that one which has remained to distinguish the Spanish *refrán* from the proverbs of the other Latin nations.

To the medieval synonyms for *refrán* cited by Cotarelo, we may add a number of others:

10. fazaña
11. conseja
12. vulgar
13. brocardico.<sup>12</sup>

Among the early names, we find *fazaña*, which first appears in the *General Estoria*:

. . . Esta *palabra* que traen las yentes como por *fazanna* et dizen: alla van leyes o mandan reyes. (XX, xlv, 580b.)

<sup>11</sup> Or even earlier; cf. the thirteenth-century *Proverbios en rima del sabio Salomon* which, although they contain an occasional *refrán*, are yet altogether literary in form and tone.

<sup>12</sup> *Letra*, *leyenda* and *escritura* are used in quoting from the Bible and other revered sources sayings which had become genuine *refranes*, but the names seem to denote the text itself, rather than the excerpts: Como dis la *letra* e es verdad provada / que en la fin jas todo el fin y la soldada. *Alexandre* (P) 1032. Qual fizo, tal habra, como diz la *leyenda*. *Prov. en rima del sabio Salomon* 69. La *leyenda* lo dize en llano tenor / que quien onrra al onrrador / otro tanto del atyenda. F. Manuel, *Canc. Baena* no. 257. . . . Dise una *escritura* / Que buen esfuerço vence ala mala ventura. *Arcipreste de Hita*, cop. 160.

. . . Et cuenta maestre Pedro, sobreste logar, que desta palabra "el Sennor lo vee" finco una *palabra de proverbio o fazanna* entre los judios quando alguno se vee en alguna angostura que dix: "El Sennor o Dios lo vee." (VI, ix, 144b.)

. . . Esto fallamos e tenemos que quiere dezir el dicho daquella *fazanna* delos auctores delos gentiles, que era el rey Antheo de Libia fijo dela tierra. (XI, xxxii, 305 b.)

. . . Dize la *fazanna* del sabio que qui non sabe soffrir mal que non viene abien, si por ventura non es. (XIII, xxv, 374b.)<sup>13</sup>

As Professor Yakov Malkiel has pointed out,<sup>14</sup> this word which has come to designate a heroic exploit originally meant "tale." At an early date, together with other names of the tale,<sup>15</sup> it developed the meaning "proverb." This meaning persisted for some time. In Juan Ruiz we find:

*Fasaña* es usada, proverbio non mintroso:  
"Mas val rrato acuçioso que dia peresoso." (Cop. 580.)

Another example appears in the *Victorial* of Gutierre Dfiez de Games, tentatively dated 1448:

Como dize la *fazaña* que Honrra e viçio e gran folgura non cave en una morada.<sup>16</sup>

The late fourteenth-century *Tractado de la doctrina* gives us a unique example of *conseja*, a name generally associated with tales:

Dize la antigua *conseja*:  
la mal ganada oveja  
mala fin ha la pelleja.<sup>17</sup>

Fernán Pérez de Guzmán offers the name *vulgar*:

Una actoridad es no muy polida  
e *bulgar* de España rrudo y grosero,  
pero todavia abtentico e vero,

<sup>13</sup> Ed. A. G. Solalinde, Madrid, 1930.

<sup>14</sup> In his forthcoming article "Old Spanish *fazaña*, *pa(s)traña*, and *pastrija*." I am indebted to Mr. Malkiel and to Mrs. María R. L. Malkiel for generous suggestions utilized in the preparation of this article.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *fablilla*, *ejemplo*, *conseja*.

<sup>16</sup> Ed. J. de Mata Carriazo, Madrid, 1940, I, 9. The more common form of this proverb is "Honra y provecho no caben so un techo or en un saco."

<sup>17</sup> Cop. 145. There is, of course, the possibility that the author had in mind a story from which the proverb was derived. The proverb, however, had been current for at least half a century; it appears in the *Cifar* (ca. 1301), ed. C. P. Wagner, Ann Arbor, 1929, p. 169.

que dize: la dueña en visa e ardida  
muy poco aprovecha en casa barrida.<sup>18</sup>

Como dize el *vulgar*,  
nacio rosa de la espina.<sup>19</sup>

A contemporary parallel is found in Juan de Lucena's *Libro de vida beata* (1463):

Helas vestidas [i.e., las armas], como dize 'l *vulgar*: buscad qui pelee.<sup>20</sup>

Another example occurs in an anonymous sixteenth-century poem found among the works of Alvar Gómez de Castro:

Dize el *vulgar* italiano:  
Chi beve il acqua della Pozeta,  
O che lo spazza o che lo meta.<sup>21</sup>

*Habla* is, of course, merely a modernized form of *fabla*. Fray Iñigo de Mendoza writes (bef. 1482):

. . . Esta *habla* castellana:  
Conla que Domingo sana  
dizen que Pedro adolece.<sup>22</sup>

The word *brocardico* is evidently another French import. It seems never to have enjoyed wide popularity, appearing before 1500 only in the *Crónica de D. Alvaro de Luna*, attributed to Gonzalo Chacón (1428?-1507):

. . . Bien es verdadero aquel *brocardico* que se suele desir: con quien pasces, que non con quien nascas.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Cancionero castellano del siglo XV*, ed. R. Foulché-Delbosc, Madrid, 1915, I, 660b. Although in this and the two following examples, *vulgar* might mean "dicho vulgar" or "lengua vulgar," the title of Horozco's collection (see n. 21, below) seems to establish it as a synonym for *refrán*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 733b.

<sup>20</sup> Ed. A. Paz y Melia, *Biblióf. esp.*, XXIX, 133. Cf. G. Correas, *Vocabulario de refranes*, Madrid, 1924, 65b: Armas tiene y gente mantiene, y busca quien pelee.

<sup>21</sup> Bib. Nac. Madrid, ms. 9936, fol. 183. The name was used occasionally well into the sixteenth century. Cf. the title of the collection made by Sebastián de Horozco (d. 1586?): *Teatro universal de Proverbios, Adagios o comunmente llamados Refranes o Vulgares que mas ordinariamente se usan en nra. España*. . . . Cited by Sbarbi, *loc. cit.*, p. 371.

<sup>22</sup> *Canc. cast. sig. XV*, I, 43a. The modern synonyms *dicho* and *decir* were not, as far as I have been able to ascertain, used to designate proverbs in the Middle Ages.

<sup>23</sup> Ed. J. de Mata Carriazo, Madrid, 1940, p. 280.

. . . Aquel vulgar *brocardico* que dise: "una cosa piensa el bayo, e otra el que le ensilla."<sup>24</sup>

Concerning Cotarelo's observations on *enxiemplo* and *retraire*, which he dates from D. Juan Manuel,<sup>25</sup> we should note that both actually appear a century earlier, in the *Primera Crónica General*.<sup>26</sup> With respect to the later fate of *ejemplo*, we may add that, far from being peculiar to the *Corbacho*, as Cotarelo believed, it was popular with such *cancionero* poets as Juan de Dueñas, Antón Montoro, and Rodrigo Cota.

It may be further noted here that *verbo*, which was still used by Alfonso Alvarez de Villasandino and, in 1439-40, by Juan Rodríguez de la Cámara,<sup>27</sup> was corrected in the fifteenth-century manuscript of the *Cifar* to *proverbio*.<sup>28</sup>

The semantics of certain of the names given to the popular proverb offers some interesting material for reflection. Before we consider the Spanish names, it will be pertinent to run over some of the oldest associations of the word "proverb." The Hebrew word *mashāl mathlā* had five other meanings besides "proverb": "poetic composition," "allegory," "parable," "taunt," "fable."<sup>29</sup> The Greek definition also emphasized the allegorical nature of the proverb and, still more strongly, its popular quality as a saying "[heard] along the road" (*paroemia*). Aristotle, defining the proverb, names as an essential quality, together with antiquity and conciseness,

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 417. This form reappears occasionally as late as the 17th century. The *Diccionario histórico de la lengua española*, II, s.v. *brocardico*, quotes a passage from *El Pasajero* of Cristóbal Suárez de Figueroa (1617) in which it is used as a synonym for *refrán*. The 1939 edition of the Academy dictionary limits its use (rare) to lawyers.

<sup>25</sup> "La forma *retraire* parece exclusiva de don Juan Manuel, pues en ningún otro autor lo hemos visto." "Retraer," *BRAE*, 1916, III, 693, and *loc. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Et tanto les pesava por este fecho que lo trayen ya por *exiemplo* por la villa, et diziense unos a otros por iuego et por escarnio: "daca la cevada. . . ." Ed. R. Menéndez Pidal, *NBAE*, V (Madrid, 1906), p. 550a. E por ende era levantado un *retraire* en las tierras: que dizien todos comunalmente que en lugar de esponias tinie ell emperador Vespasiano a los procuradores; ca assi cuemo la esponia coie ayna ell agua, otrosi finchie ell sus procuradores de riquezas, et tolliegelas luego. *Ibid.*, 137a. These are good examples of the transition from "byword" to "proverb" discussed below.

<sup>27</sup> . . . Non faz agüero, / segunt *verbo* antiguo, el ave ques muda. *Canc. de Baena* no. 73. Dize el *verbo* antigo: Merced es al rey vengarse de su amigo. *El siervo libre del amor*, ed. A. Paz y Melia, Madrid, 1884, p. 58.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. variants, *ed. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> A. Cohen, *Ancient Jewish Proverbs*, London, 1911, p. 16. We shall see that the last three meanings are common to many of the Spanish names.



fitness of the saying for frequent quotation.<sup>30</sup> In Cicero, "esse in proverbio" means "to get oneself talked about,"<sup>31</sup> and in Livy, "venire in proverbium," "to become a byword or proverbial case."<sup>32</sup> In Pliny, the meaning of "vertere in ludicrum proverbii" is close to "taunt."<sup>33</sup> The element of constant repetition appears to receive more and more emphasis as time goes on.

In the Vulgate, the word *proverbium* is used 29 times. Of these, only 9 have reference to actual proverbs. Nine others designate a byword or proverbial case, i.e., one which everyone talks about. Some of the remaining examples mean "reproach," and one, "allegory."<sup>34</sup>

Moving down to medieval times, we find in the *Glossarium* of Ducange, "Proverbia dicere vel proverbia vituperare"—and thence *proverbiosus* and *proverbiositas*, all of which recall the Hebrew "taunt." In a document dated 1059, quoted by Ducange, *proverbiari* seems to mean "to preach" or "to pray"—again close to "repeat" or "talk about": "Igitur locus iste de quo *proverbiari vel orare* decrevimus."<sup>35</sup>

In English, the Oxford Dictionary (s.v. *proverb*) cites Chaucer's interesting verb, "to proverb," meaning "to teach"—obviously by frequent repetition. In *Troilus* (III) we find:

This wise clerkes that ben dede han evere this *proverbed* us yong.

The two earliest definitions of the English word "proverb" also stress the element of repetition. In 1528 Saint Thomas More calls it "an old said saw." Johnson defines it as "a short sentence frequently repeated by the people; a saw; an adage."

This emphasis on the spoken word, constantly repeated, is likewise characteristic of the Spanish concept of the proverb. A con-

<sup>30</sup> Cf. B. J. Whiting, *The Nature of the Proverb*, Cambridge, 1932. He quotes from *Aristotelis Opera*, ed. Acad. Regia Borussica, Berlin, 1870, V, 1474.

<sup>31</sup> III Verr., 53.

<sup>32</sup> XL, 46.

<sup>33</sup> Lib. III, cap. ii.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. the following examples: *Byword*—*Job* 17-6: Posuit me quasi in *proverbium vulgi*, et exemplum sum coram eis. (This is close to "taunt.") Cf. also *Deut.* 28-37 and *Ezech.* 14-8. *Reproach*—*Jer.* 24-9: Et dabo eos in vexationem afflictionemque omnibus regnis terrae, in opprobrium et in parabolam et in *proverbium* et in maledictionem in universis locis, ad quae eieci eos. Cf. also 2 *Par.* 7-21. *Allegory, figure*—*Ezech.* 24-3: Et dices per *proverbium* ad domum irritatricem parabolam et loqueris ad eos: Haec dicit Dominus Deus: Pone ollam, pone, inquam, et mitte in eam aquam. . . .

<sup>35</sup> Ducange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* . . . , VI (Paris, 1846), s.v. *proverbiari*.



sideration of the various names of the *refrán* will show us how many of them reflect those older corollary meanings of "proverb" which stress frequent repetition—tale, fable, parable, counsel or advice, gossip, byword, reproach, taunt.

Perhaps the best documented of the names is *retraire*. From its origin, *retraer* meant, as well as "to draw back, or bring back," "to repeat often," "to bruit about." It is so used in several early texts:

Como dice el proverbio que suelen *retraer*,  
que "La codicia mala saco suele romper."  
(*Libro de Apolonio*, cop. 57.)

Commo dis la palabra que suelen *retraer* . . .  
(*Libro de Alexandre*, cop. 424.)

Empeçol un dicho malo a *retraer*  
dixol que non devie Rey a seer.  
(*Ibid.*, cop. 1063.)

Empos aquello, assi como *retraen* los omnes, quiso el conde don Alvaro traer casamiento . . . (*Primera Crónica General*, 711a.)

. . . Muchas vezes oy *rretraer*, ca muchos que nunca se vieran ni se conocieran de so uno mucho se quisieron despues muy grand bien. (*Historia troyana*, 17.)<sup>38</sup>

Development along this line seems to have reached "gossip." The *Tractado de la doctrina* of Pedro de Beragüe shows

De alguno non *retrayas*  
mas avisate non cayas  
en tal yerro, porque ayas  
de callar. (Cop. 93.)

From a very early date, however, the word developed a highly specialized meaning, which might be defined something like this: "To recall, for purposes of amusement and possible profit, the characteristics or past actions of some person present." The *Siete Partidas* gives detailed instructions for the pursuit of this polite diversion, which is characterized as follows:

<sup>38</sup> Ed. R. Menéndez Pidal, Madrid, 1934, p. 150. This meaning of the word is carried through the fifteenth century; cf. Lope de Stúñiga, *Coplas*, Bib. Nac., ms. 19158, fol. 214: Muy pesados son por cierto / mis dolores / de mover / que me tienen medio muerto / et non me dexan amores / *retraer*. Cf. n. 25. Cotarelo's article, which was not known to me at the time these notes were prepared, has copious documentation of the various meanings of *retraer* and its derivatives.

*Retraer* en los fechos o en las cosas como fueron, o son o pueden seer . . . para alabar la buena o para desatar la mala . . . (*Partida* II, ix, Ley 29.)

After observing that it is important to consider the time, the place and the manner in which the game is to be played, the directions state that the player should illustrate or drive home his point "por buena *palabra*, o por buen *ejemplo* o por buena *fazaña*."<sup>37</sup> Above all, says the author, the laws of courtesy must be observed, for "dice el *vierbo* antiguo que non es juego onde ome non ric." These rules of the game are repeated by the author of the anonymous fourteenth-century *Libro de castigos e documentos*, formerly attributed to D. Sancho IV:

Cuando departieres, para mientes con cuales lo faces, e que es aquello sobre que departes. Cuando *retrajieres* mete mentes quien eres tu que retraes, e ante cuales lo faces, e asi non erraras en ello.<sup>38</sup>

Here we have the pattern for the proverb games which appear to have been popular with the *cancionero* poets.<sup>39</sup>

As early as the *Cid*, *retraer* also had a pejorative connotation, "to cast up," "echar en cara," "reprochar,"<sup>40</sup> just as the Biblical *proverbium* had also acquired the occasional meaning "reproach."<sup>41</sup> This meaning of *retraer* persists at least through the fifteenth century, as the following examples from the *Crónica de D. Alvaro de Luna* will testify:

El Maestre lo retrato reprimiendole e *retrayendole* el traje que a la sazón traya, deziendole que mas cuydado tenia de aplazer e parescer bien a las damas que de mirar lo que a su serbiçio era conplidero.

El Maestre *retraya* e reprimia al Rey de muchas cossas . . .<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ley 30. Although these words do not here necessarily designate proverbs, their close association with each other and with *retraer* is surely significant.

<sup>38</sup> Ed. P. de Gayangos, *BAE*, LI (Madrid, 1860), p. 177b.

<sup>39</sup> F. de la Torre, *Juego de naipes*, *loc. cit.*, p. 128; an anonymous composition in the *Cancionero de Herberay*, in Gallardo, *Ensayo* . . . I, 555 ff.; Pinar, *Juego trobado*, in *Canc. cast. del sig. XV*, II, 952. It seems probable that these compositions were really acted out, inasmuch as the proverbs, together with other appropriate properties, were sometimes specifically parcelled out by the poet among those present on a given occasion. The Oxford Dictionary, s.v. "proverb," describes games of this kind, still played in England and the U. S.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. R. Menéndez Pidal, *Cantar de Mio Cid*, I, 826.

<sup>41</sup> Cf., for example: And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a *reproach* and a *proverb*, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. *Jer.* XXIV, 9.

<sup>42</sup> *Ed. cit.*, pp. 329, 359. Additional earlier examples are to be found in *Alexandre*, cop. 222; *Cifar*, *edit. cit.*, p. 13; *Lucanor* I, xi, xxiv, xlvii; *Gran Conquistista de Ultramar*, *ed. cit.*, pp. 149b, 226a, 240a, 377a.

So it is not surprising to find that the related form *retraire* should have been applied at some point to the popular proverb, which was so often used to admonish, mock or reprove.

*Proverbio*, which enjoyed more constant popularity, has an even more varied history. Very early, it was synonymous with "sooth-saying":

La segunda manera de adivinanza es de los agoreros, et de los sorteros, et de los fechiceros que catan en agüero de aves, o de estornudos o de palabras, a que llaman *proverbio*, o echan suertes o catan en agua, o en cristal. . . . (*Siete Partidas* VII, Ley xxiii, 1.)<sup>43</sup>

This meaning of the word may perhaps be traced to a combination of the Hebrew and Greek "allegory" and "parable"; it is already suggested, in some cases, by the Vulgate *proverbium*.<sup>44</sup> To Erasmus, the association of oracular wisdom with the proverb seems to be quite clear: "The philosophy of the ancients," he says, "was almost completely contained in proverbs: the oracles of the ancient wise men are nothing else."<sup>45</sup>

Because of its closeness to the Latin prototype, *proverbio* probably always had the meaning "maxim," "counsel." This was sometimes extended—as was also the Vulgate *proverbium*—to include "advice," whether or not the good counsel included proverbial wisdom. Alfonso de Baena notes at the head of a poem (419) in his *Cancionero*:

Esto de desir fiso e ordeno el dicho Gomes Peres . . . el qual es bien fecho e de muy buenos *proverbios* como trebejos.

Fernando de la Torre writes:

<sup>43</sup> This meaning was still current in the 16th and 17th centuries: No es buen *proverbio*. No es buen prenostico. No es buena señal. (El Dr. Espinosa, *Refranes*, Bib. Palacio Madrid, ms. 615, fol. 267, 2 [ca. 1527].) Porque como es fuera del orden de la naturaleza que nego a las mugeres la barba, la tiene por de mal *proverbio* nuestro refran. (Dr. Luis Galindo, *Sentencias filosóficas*, Bib. Nac. Madrid, ms. Ee-166-175, III, BA, 30, s.v. "La muger barbuda.") The semantics of *proverbio* = *prenóstico* poses an interesting problem which I am not at this time prepared to solve.

<sup>44</sup> *Ecclesiasticus* 18-29: Sensati in verbis et ipsi sapienter egerunt et intellexerunt veritatem et iustitiam et impleverunt *proverbia* et iudicia. *Ibid.* 39-3: Occulta *proverbiorum* exquiret et in absconditis paraboliarum conversabitur. *Ibid.* 8-9: Ne despicias narrationem presbyterorum sapientium et in *proverbiis* eorum conversare. Cf. also *ibid.* 6-35 and 47-18. In all these examples the wise sayings peculiar to the priests are very close to oracular pronouncements.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. L. Riber, "Erasmus y Luis Vives," *BRAE*, 1945, XXIV, 208. I have not been able to locate this passage in Erasmus' writings.

Como le fuese amonestado que olvidase el amor de aquel mancebo . . . la respuesta fue . . . : bien conosco vuestros amonestamientos e *proverbios* ser con sano deseo e voluntad.<sup>46</sup>

This recalls Chaucer's verb "to proverb."

Like the Hebrew word for "proverb," *proverbio*, as well as *retraire*, sometimes meant "taunt." In the *Alexandre* we find:

Ante que a el plegase commo era sobervio  
conpeço a desir mucho villano *proverbio*  
dixo don Alexandre non sodes tan estrenio  
que oy non quitedes a Dario el enperio. (Cop. 1376.)

And finally, we should note that many of these names sometimes denoted a "proverbial case," or a "classical example." *Proverbio* was so used at an early date, following the Biblical usage.<sup>47</sup> Berceo says, in the *Signos de juicio*,

El cuerpo y el alma yaceran en refrigerio,  
eso clama doblado gozo el Evangelio:  
otrosi los dampnados abran doble lacerio  
debía movernos mucho solo esti *proverbio*. (Cop. 53.)

*Fablilla*, *ejemplo*, *palabra* and *fazaña* appear to have been given the same meaning on occasion.<sup>48</sup>

These different meanings common to twelve of the predecessors of the name *refrán* may be grouped under three headings: those associated with words—*verbo*, *parlilla*, *palabra*, *proverbio*; those associated with stories—*fablilla* (*hablilla*), *fazaña*, *ejemplo*, *conseja*; and those associated with popular quality or gossip value—*retraire*, *patraña*, *vulgar*, *brocardico*. With the single exception of *verso*, which stresses metrical form, all these medieval names emphasize the element of constant repetition—tale, fable, augury or parable, advice, gossip, byword, reproach, taunt.

The medieval examples of the word *refrán*, before (and even after) it was adopted as the name of the proverb, follow this same pattern. When Villasandino says

Des i an tomado agora un *refran*  
viçosos e ricos:

<sup>46</sup> *Loc. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. 3 *Reg.* 9:7: Eritque Israel in *proverbium* et in *fabulam*. (Here, two of the words under consideration are already associated.) 2 *Par.* 7:21: Et domus ista erit in *proverbium*.

<sup>48</sup> Daria por tal su reyno el Rey de Castiella, / e seria tal mercado que seria por *fabliella*. Berceo, *Sta. Oria*, cop. 79. E todo el engaño que fizo Sinon / asi

por que buscaran  
boliços nen guerras?  
Por ser enloucados,<sup>49</sup>

he is simply using a parallel to one of the documented meanings of the French *refrain*: "Ce qu'on ramène incessamment en ses discours."<sup>50</sup> This meaning of *refrain* dates from the Middle Ages:

Ung clerc d'illec composa une chanson qui en icelui pais est encore chantée en tel *refraing*: Mauvais crestien fut celui qui mon pot embla.<sup>51</sup>

An example from Rabelais makes it clear that the word was sometimes quite independent of association with song or verse form:

A chaque *refrain* de ses souffraiges, a chaque fois qu'il recommençoit ses prières . . . etc.<sup>52</sup>

We have one example of *refran* in its intermediate stage of "proverbial case":

Es verdad ques gran enojo  
una razon que se pone  
por *refran* y por antojo:  
fulano, que Dios perdone,  
por cierto seria escusada  
si olvidar se pudiese,  
que tal memoria cantada  
ni rezada se dixiese,

se dezia como por *exemplo*. Santillana, *Com. de Ponza*, in *Cancionero de Roma*, ed. M. Canal Gómez, II (Florence, 1935), 164. Por ser de muchos quista, amada e presciada, dando de sy *fazaña* como la viña de Dios, que quien non quiere non vendimia. *Corbacho* I, iii; *Bibliof. esp.*, Madrid, 1901, p. 17.

<sup>49</sup> *Cancioneiro gallego castelhano*, ed. H. R. Lang, N. Y.-London, 1902, p. 82.

<sup>50</sup> E. Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, Paris, 1883, s.v. *refrain*. The expression "Avec lui, c'est toujours le même *refrain*" is paraphrased as "Il répète sans cesse la même chose." The following late examples of the word are cited: Il fit des exclamations dont le *refrain* était . . . etc. *Hamilt. Gramm.* 3. La destruction de Carthage était le *refrain* de tous les discours . . . etc. *D'Alemb., Lett. à Voltaire* 8 Sept. 1762. The Provençal *refranh* is given as the etymon.

<sup>51</sup> Laur. de Premierf. *Decam.* B. N. 129, f°128d. Cited by F. E. Godefroy, *Dict. de l'ancienne langue française* (Paris, 1902), s.v. *refrain*.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*—Sainte-Palaye, IV, p. 34, *Nouv. prol.* These examples make the guess of Sebastián de Covarrubias (*Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, 1611) not so wild a philological risk as some critics have believed: Proverbio, a *referendo*, porque se refiere de unos en otros. Y tanto es *refrán* que *referirán*: porque muchos en diversos propositos refieren un mismo *refrán*, que fue dicho a uno. (S.v. *refran*.)



mas como puede escusar  
el sochantre de cantar? <sup>23</sup>

The word *refrán*, therefore, is indeed closely associated with the French *refrain*—probably by virtue of their common derivation from the Provençal *refranh*. But the *refrán* would seem to owe its name, not to a similarity in metrical structure with the *refrain*, as Cotarelo thought, but rather to their common characteristic of frequent repetition.

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<sup>23</sup> Fdo. de la Torre, *loc. cit.*, p. 130. That *refrán* had this meaning over a considerable period of time is indicated by the following additional examples: Yo nascido de Luzbel / moro siempre por *refran* / con mi cara de buriel, / sallido por mongibel . . . El Comendador Roman, *Coplas*, in *Canc. Gen.*, ed. J. A. Balanchana, 1882, I, 450a. Soy Celestina . . . sobrina de aquella que por mucha . . . sabiduria es puesta en *refran* de todos. S. de Muñón, *Tragicomedia de Lisandro y Roselia* (1542), Madrid, 1872, p. 165.



## GRACIÁN'S IDEA OF THE *CONCEPTO*

GRACIÁN: *De suerte, que se puede definir el concepto. Es un acto del entendimiento que exprime la correspondencia que se halla entre los objetos.*<sup>1</sup>

CRITILLO: *Cada uno proporciona las estrellas como quiere.*<sup>2</sup>

THE *Agudeza y Arte de Ingenio* has to be considered from two different angles. First of all, since the conceit is usually thought of primarily as a complicated figure, it is necessary to show that Gracián sees it consistently, in his own way, under this aspect. An attempt to do this was made in a previous article;<sup>3</sup> and a simple and limited view of the conceit resulted, in which it is pictured as a visible manifold of images with to some extent disparate relationships established simultaneously between them, by the use of tropes or of other words capable of bearing some kind of double meaning. But Gracián has a more ambitious aim. His most striking originality lies in his doctrine of the intellectual *concepto*, that is to say in his idea of the conceit as a single special act of the understanding. This dominates his attitude towards it. The various complex figures, which he describes with unequal success and adequacy in the *Agudeza*, are supposed to have in common a certain kind of meaning which it is the function of the wit to produce and to grasp. The attempt to understand sympathetically this idea and the peculiar difficulties it involves ought at least to throw light on the development of wit in the seventeenth century, on the nature and origin of one kind of dilemma in which one of the most subtle and indefatigable of the wits of the period became involved, and on the kind of solution he sought in practice and in criticism. If a style reflects an "attitude to life" then the *Agudeza*, being a work of original objective criticism by an enterprising stylist, represents a mind developing an attitude to its attitude; each affecting the other, both having to be reconciled. But of course for Gracián there was no question of reflecting attitudes; the avowed object of art—at any

<sup>1</sup> *Agudeza*, p. 19. Page references are to the Austral ed., Buenos Aires, 1942. The actual text used is that of 1649. I have to thank the Research Fund Committee of the University of Sheffield for facilitating photostats of the latter.

<sup>2</sup> *Criticón*, Philadelphia, 1938, I, 125.

<sup>3</sup> "An Interpretation of Gracián's 'Agudeza y arte de ingenio,'" *HR*, 1948, XVI, 275-299.

rate of art at its highest, specifically of wit—was not this but the attainment of truth; or, if this was not precisely or purely its conscious aim, it was a necessary ultimate guarantee of its value. In the *Criticón* Gracián faces us in his strength; in the *Agudeza*, as we watch the play of his mind round this fundamental question, we can more easily catch him in his weakness. What follows is meant as a survey of some main points.

I. WIT AND THE UNDERSTANDING. In the general discussion of wit with which the *Agudeza* begins, the term *ingenio*, which is not formally defined, is used to mean the understanding (*entendimiento*) in its function of producing wit. The conceit is thus held from the beginning to be the work of the understanding. But this is not proved. Nor is it allied to a description of the conceit as an exercise in ratiocination. The dignity thus given to wit no doubt owes a good deal to the old Renaissance exaltation of poetry. But Gracián is not a Renaissance neo-Platonist. At bottom it amounts in his theory simply to an assertion, made as a matter of experience, that the conceit has meaning. If meaning belongs to the understanding, then the conceit is an act of the understanding; if the understanding has to do with a reality other than the mind itself, then it must refer to objects of some kind; add the classical Aristotelian-scholastic view, that the human intelligence is limited to correspondences, and there, already imposed, is the definition of the *concepto* as an act of the understanding which expresses the correspondence found between objects. The definition is simply a dry, irreducible statement of a kernel of truth, of correspondence to external reality, in wit. But it is also held that wit, while belonging to the understanding, aims at harmony and beauty; and Gracián's language shows plainly that this beauty is quite analogous to that of other arts.<sup>4</sup> Wit is not at all an "intellectual" art in any merely descriptive sense, but is the work of the understanding functioning artistically; it is the work of art, which is not necessarily at the highest level of the mind,<sup>5</sup> raised to that level. But it is not raised by thought. It retains always the character of something immediately experienced. The *concepto* is not an abstracted content, but the total unified figure in its intellectual aspect.<sup>6</sup> Gracián is really an early devotee of

<sup>4</sup> *Lo que es para los ojos la hermosura, y para los oídos la consonancia, eso es para el entendimiento el concepto.* (*Ag.*, p. 15.) See also note 19b.

<sup>5</sup> The hierarchy of the different arts was of course a matter of serious debate. See Menéndez y Pelayo, *Hist. Id. Est.*, III, 191-192.

<sup>6</sup> For the important distinction, reverted to below, between *agudeza* and *concepto* as aspects of the conceit, see previous art., mentioned in note 3, p. 277.

a modern "aesthetic experience"; and an early seeker for a theory of its meaning.

This meaning is felt as something unitary dwelling in the concrete imagined object. Understood in the light of this, many of his opinions become much clearer, particularly those concerning ordinary trope, which are not so inadequate to his own times and purpose as they at first appear. Mr. Day Lewis, writing of English "metaphysical poetry," is able to discuss, in a manner typical of much modern English criticism, its fusion of "intellectual with sensuous meaning."<sup>7</sup> For Gracián, this kind of criticism would be impossible, because the varied evolution of poetry that lies behind it and makes it at all comprehensible had not happened. He could hardly think of a kind of intellectual poetry with one kind of meaning and then of a more purely sensuous poetry with a sensuous meaning, the conceit being then describable as though it contained both. He thinks of the sensuous as meaningless until it becomes an object of the understanding. The understanding active in poetry is the *ingenio*. The trope, like the simple substantive, simply brings imaginable material which the conceit is to inform, to fill with its meaning:

La agudeza tiene por materia, y por fundamento, muchas de las figuras retóricas; pero dales la forma y realce del concepto.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *The Poetic Image*, London, 1947, p. 43. I have chosen this as typical of a point of view current in England, the ultimate source of which is T. S. Eliot's essays on the "metaphysicals" in *Collected Essays*. It seems to arise in his desire as a poet to find a way of integrating poetic elements which, since the seventeenth century, appear to have been divided; but while it had a certain validity in the context of twentieth century poetic aims, it has been misleading to some extent, emphasizing the strength of seventeenth century wit whilst hiding its narrowness. Gracián, never having seen the simpler "rational" verse of the Enlightenment or the later Romantic cult of the "irrational" luminous image, cannot possibly see the conceit as a strange tense marriage of reason and image; no one has yet supposed it possible to divide them; we shall find however that in this, which seems to be his strength, lies in fact also his weakness; and that it is the *ingenio's* identification of thinking with experiencing which drives Gracián into a position where the resources of traditional poetry seem to become exhausted. The importance of the *Agudeza* is that its great originality enables us to see certain fundamental assumptions functioning nakedly, without a wrapping of authorities. Through him we can see how wit declines, and how its developing complexity really leads towards the very different period which later turned against it. His actual starting point is simple, traditional and sound: the conceit is necessarily rationally ordered, being an activity of a rational being. There is in theory no such thing as a 'poetic image' as such. Words, and the pictures they arouse in the mind, have their true meaning as parts of a whole; they cannot be thought of as in any way *opposing* this whole. All art is a matter of intelligent proportioning of parts.

<sup>8</sup> *Ag.*, p. 302. His neatest statement of the point.

It is only in becoming the matter of the conceit that the trope becomes merely sensuous in itself. As a figure distinct from the conceit the trope is practically ignored; it is not given a particular kind of meaning of its own. And we find that when on occasion Gracián does come to be pleased with a figure which most of us would probably agree is no more than a simple classical antithesis, its poetic adequacy leads him to class it as a conceit; for example, this line from Fray Luis:

y mi gozo troc6 en pena infinita.<sup>9</sup>

Most of the examples given by Gracián in the first part of the *Agudeza* are witty by any test; but the truth is that the conceit, though distinguishable from other figures, is not rigorously divided from other arts. It is rather the field in which he best understands art in general, in which there comes to its best expression something that all art seeks to express. It is quite reasonable for him to use the term *agudeza* in the second part of the work to embrace, in a larger sense, all imaginative literature. The *ingenio* is for him what the poetic imagination is for the romantic; the *concepto* is its shortest flight.

His view of the trope, apart from the question of its meaning, as something unitary—*una flor elocuente*<sup>10</sup>—does not arise from a failure to analyse it on the part of a conceptist whose whole interest is absorbed by the complexities of wit. It is quite parallel to his reduction of the intellectual *concepto* itself to a unity, and to his avoidance, as we shall see, of any consideration of the element of

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39. There are other doubtful examples in the same passage. Gracián is no more able to draw a perfectly clear line between classical rhetoric and the conceit, considered as external verbal forms, than anyone else. He relies on his own reactions in each case. He is himself such a wit that his own *Criticón* is the most purely witty work ever written; but the same talent leads him to see wittily sometimes into figures when others do not. The example quoted here does accord with his description, in Disc. V, of the conceit of improportion, since it consists of two antithetical terms linked by a verb which conveys a real continuity between the objects designated. But the verb *troc6* happens to be one which by its very meaning will permit an easy emotional transition from one term to another. That is, if the reader wishes it. Gracián goes one way; we, most likely, another. Write *nace de* instead of *troc6* and the mind is forced to hold both terms together, and see them as reconciled. But dwell long enough on the line in isolation—as Gracián may have done, poring over possible examples for his *Agudeza*—and the effect is the same whatever the precise meaning of the verb. In general, of course, one's attitude is determined automatically by the context; and it is this which will decide whether a particular oxymoron is witty or not.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.



difference or difficulty in the conceit as a part of its meaning. If we see in metaphor the essence of poetry, and look on metaphor analytically, as a presentation of similarity in the dissimilar, then we shall naturally look on the conceit in the same way. It will appear as a way of extending the borrowed classical metaphor, as a way of giving it fresh life—or merely as a flogging of dead horses, according to taste; while, still under the rule of analytical reasoning, we shall find in it a more intense awareness, not only of the unity, but of the difference between the objects compared in it. It will thus be for us a peculiarly “metaphysical” art; whether this term is used contemptuously or not. But the conceptist Gracián is very far from this view. To his mind, the trope is something simple and sensuous, and has an attraction of its own; the *concepto* is simple and intellectual, and informs it.

We are faced therefore with a theory that is quite strange to us, and that springs from an attitude of mind lying so deep as to be taken for granted by Gracián. It is simply that Gracián still assumes a given ordered universe, in which the mind has full freedom to act; and its acts are single acts. The unity he sees in the *concepto* derives directly from its unity in experience; it is that of the mind's unbroken leap. If we consider the complexity of seventeenth century wit the outcome of a struggle to hold together a cultural world that threatens to disintegrate, then this critical bias towards an emphasis on unity, in one involved in the struggle, may seem natural and perhaps inevitable. The *Agudeza* suggests that the idea is fanciful or that it involves serious difficulties. Gracián betrays not the slightest consciousness of any such motive. But however that may be, the weight of this bias, and the distance that separates Gracián from ourselves, is shown clearly in the fact that when he does come to consider the conceit—not the *concepto*, but the concrete objective *agudeza*—as something complex, then he sees its complexity not, as we so easily tend to, as a connecting of the disparate, but as a connecting of the already connected: the subject of the discourse and its “adjacents.” He sees it as a kind of intellectual rhyming or counterpoint linking the terms of the discourse.<sup>11</sup> He is not deficient in power of analysis. He sees differently from us; and perhaps not altogether worse.

But if wit is assigned to the understanding, the question of how

<sup>11</sup> In his description of *proporción*. See below, Sec. IV. Gracián is fond of the figurative use of *contrapunto*. Cf. *La desnuda narración es como el canto llano; sobre él se echa después el agradable artificioso contrapunto.* (*Ibid.*, p. 360.) Also *el contrapunto de un singular desengaño.* (*Crit.*, III, 339.)

to make and preserve a distinction between understanding in general and wit-understanding becomes important. Gracián assumes such a distinction, but stops short of critically investigating it. This is his greatest weakness; for it permits him in his own life to tend to absorb all understanding into wit, and thus to create for himself a problem that he will have to contrive to solve somehow as a wit, without critical knowledge of its source.

In the *Agudeza*, the *ingenio* appears as the mental power which has for its object the conceit—the objective work of art, the *agudeza* or *sutileza*:

Si los materiales objetos dicen una cierta agradable simpatía y una gran conformidad con sus inferiores potencias, ¿cuánta mayor alcanzará una ingeniosa sutileza con la que es reina de todas ellas?; digo el ingenio.<sup>12</sup>

The loftiness of the *ingenio* is proclaimed with fervour, but appears to be theoretically based on the agreed loftiness of the understanding in general; for the understanding has other objects besides the conceit. It is in the line of fine arts, not of the whole of intellectual activity, that wit and the conceit are “proved” to be pre-eminent:

Toda potencia intencional del alma, digo las que perciben objetos, gozan de algún artificio en ellos; la proporción entre las partes del visible, es la hermosura; entre los sonidos, la consonancia, que hasta el vulgar gusto halla combinación entre lo picante y lo suave, entre lo dulce y lo agrio.

*Artificio* obviously refers here in the first place to fine arts.<sup>13</sup> He continues:

<sup>12</sup> *Ag.*, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> This also shows that Gracián assumes that all fine arts produce, in their different modes, a unity embracing difference. In the plastic arts, this is visible and even measurable, since it has to do with the disposal of material objects; and he speaks of it without more ado by its proper name, proportion. Proportion is necessarily intellectual. In talking of art in this way, Gracián is no more an “intellectualist” than any one of hundreds of predecessors. The interesting point is that he seems able to see this proportion with ease, or to take it for granted, only where it is quantitative. But in the case of music, which, as it is actually heard, is not measurable in this way, he descends first to the plane of the feelings—where differences become oppositions—and points to a mixture of the pleasant and the unpleasant; then he thinks of the mind as ruling this mixture: it *halla combinación*, makes an adjustment, a proportion, between the different things offered to it. A certain sensualism, or a materialistic tendency (no doubt with its source in nominalism) has obscured the metaphysical basis of the proportion of art; Gracián’s “intellectualism” is simply a matter of the calling in of the understanding, in a special aesthetic function (the *ingenio*), to reconquer lost territory. See note 19b.



El entendimiento, pues, como primera y principal potencia, álzase con la prima del artificio, con lo extremado del primor, en todas sus diferencias de objetos.<sup>14</sup>

In the production of conceits, the *entendimiento* operates as the *ingenio*. But it remains the understanding. The mental act which is the *concepto* is thus referred directly to *entendimiento*:

Resplandece esta conformidad con el entendimiento en este compuesto de conceptos. . . .<sup>15</sup>

In the same way, the definition of the *concepto* describes it baldly as an act of the understanding. What mediates between *ingenio* and *concepto*, or between *entendimiento* and the objective *agudeza*, is some subtle art:

Pero esta conformidad, o simpatía entre los conceptos y el ingenio, en alguna otra perfección se funda, en algún sutilísimo artificio, que es la causa radical de que se conforme la agudeza, y desdiga tanto del entendimiento su contraria. Y ése es el verdadero constitutivo del concepto, que vamos rastreando.<sup>16</sup>

Wit is then understanding, though not all understanding belongs to wit. As regards wit, the position is simple and can be summarised as follows. There is one single act of the mind expressed in the conceit, of which *agudeza* and *concepto* are aspects; *concepto* corresponds directly to *entendimiento*, *agudeza* to *ingenio*. *Ingenio* becomes a power of the understanding to act artistically, to transform its own object harmoniously; <sup>17</sup> the *agudeza* is the result of the exercise of this power; *concepto* therefore has to be thought of as the understanding's essential act in grasping reality now auto-transformed by being involved in *agudeza*.<sup>18</sup> But there is nothing in all

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17. The rest of the passage is given in note 19b, and shows that he thinks of dialectics also as an intellectual art. It ought therefore to have equal rank with the conceit. But this is given precedence because it is beautiful.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17. *Otra* is not pointless, as was suggested in previous essay (n. 15). It refers specifically to an aesthetic perfection.

<sup>17</sup> Harmony is really approached, when considered alone, from the side of the feelings rather than the intelligence, as something pleasing rather than true. In wit, he tries to establish the primacy of the beautiful by raising harmony to the level of the understanding; by making it so to speak a form or mould of the understanding in action. This guarantees the pre-eminence of wit in Gracián's life. But its position is attained merely by an initial conquest, and is in consequence always insecure.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *De aquí se saca con evidencia, que el concepto, que la agudeza, consiste también en artificio.* . . . (note 19b.) After saying *concepto*, he says *agudeza*, as a more suitable word in the context of *artificio*. But he keeps both, because one is contained in the other.

this to prevent Gracián from in practice exalting wit above all other ways of understanding; and he does so, because he chooses, because he must:

Tiene cada potencia un rey entre sus actos, y un otro entre sus objetos; entre los de la mente reina el concepto, triunfa la agudeza. . . . Entendimiento sin agudeza, ni conceptos, es sol sin luz. . . .<sup>19</sup>

The immediately disturbing factor here is the difficulty of finding any external regulating principle for this specific activity of the

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

a) The word order is careful, and observes the distinction between *concepto* and *agudeza*. *Actos: concepto; objetos: agudeza.*

b) The passage quoted above, against note 14, continues: *Destínanse las Artes a estos artificios, que para su composición fueron inventadas, adelantando siempre, y facilitando su perfección. Atiende la dialéctica a la conexión de términos, para formar bien un argumento, un silogismo, y la retórica al ornato de palabras, para componer una flor elocuente, que lo es un tropo, una figura. De aquí se saca con evidencia, que el concepto, que la agudeza, consiste también en artificio, y el superlativo de todos. . . .* It is superlative obviously because for him it seems to make beauty and truth one. This, as in Keats's case, is simply a matter of a strong desire or belief produced not philosophically, but within poetry, and he can make no attempt to prove it. He tries to convey the point by analogies. *No se contenta el ingenio con sola la verdad, como el juicio, sino que aspira a la hermosura. Poco fuera en la arquitectura asegurar firmeza, si no atendiera al ornato. Qué simetría, en griega, o en romana arquitectura, así lisonjea la vista, como el artificio primoroso suspende la inteligencia en este elegante epigrama. . . .* (*Ibid.*, p. 18.) *Hállase simetría intelectual entre los términos del pensamiento, tanto más primorosa, que la material entre columnas y acroteras, cuanto va del objeto del ingenio, al de un sentido* (p. 27).

*Ornato, hermosura, simetría*, like *armonía* and *consonancia*, are all analogues of the conceit's intellectual beauty. *Ornato*, no less than *simetría*, is a matter of fitness or proportion. As has been said, proportion belongs to the understanding. But in these, it is produced by the artist's practical intelligence guiding his hand as it works upon material objects; whereas in the conceit the material is the stuff of thought. The conceit thus seems to be a proportional shaping, by the understanding itself, of the speculative activity of the understanding; *ingenio* being, in one operation, both speculative and practical. It seems impossible to explain how this could come about except as a consequence of an uncriticised replacement of the metaphysical intelligible by something felt interiorly and subject to a process of variation within the mind; the act of the understanding is a subjective and relatively slow experience which, starting from some obscure and no doubt intuitional source, reaches its final form and therefore its truth by way of a kind of choice. But a choice excludes other choices. As this situation develops there arises the need of a criticism which will guarantee the choice by attributing to the kind of sublimated practical intelligence which is the *ingenio* the traditional certainty granted to the understanding as a whole. Truth thus has later (see Sec. VI) to be admitted to be subjective so that it can still be believed in; this Gracián does quite cheerfully.

*ingenio*.<sup>20</sup> Gracián is in the situation of a believer in pure poetry who yet needs to relate the poetry to something outside itself. But he has not the neo-Platonist's belief in affective poetic knowledge of the Absolute as a theoretical guarantee of his art, and, it seems, no adequate substitute for it. As it is, he begins by permitting the understanding, in virtue of its acknowledged character as a vital and active power, to become aesthetically creative, without any apparent suspicion of all that this implies; *ingenio* steals the old authority of *intellectus agens* to disguise the fact that it is involved in various ways with aims and desires which are not purely intellectual. The conclusion is inescapable: Gracián is only able to argue as he does because the whole notion of understanding has in his period undergone one of those considerable but unperceived changes which make one age a stranger to another, and which produce unexpected effects in the course of time. The eccentricity of the *Agudeza* lies simply in the fact that it reproduces in an unaccustomed sphere the tendency of so much new thinking in the seventeenth century. The self-sufficient mind imposes its own criteria of clarity or economy—in Gracián's case of aesthetic harmony—upon a nature which becomes correspondingly passive before its operations; and which then, in revenge, begins to show itself as a jealous keeper of its own secrets. Fray Luis would have warned Gracián of the common human fallibility of the poet and his art;<sup>21</sup> but wit is such a necessity to him that fallibility cannot be allowed in it.

The immediate consequences are many. In the *Agudeza* eth attempt to supply the place of such a principle leads to the tendency, evident in successive Discourses, to try to find justification of the conceit—always *post factum*—in the concrete circumstances in which it arises: a critical drift in the direction of realism;<sup>22</sup> there is

<sup>20</sup> The difficulty is to get from harmony, which is human, to something extra-human. Gracián states in an aphorism a common opinion of the period concerning the relation between art and nature: *Donde no media el artificio, toda se pervierte la naturaleza.* (*Crit.*, I, 108.) The comment is obvious: "Y donde no media X, todo se pervierte el artificio." The X, in criticism, is sought by inspection of the circumstances in which the conceit arises.

<sup>21</sup> See for example A. Guy, *La pensée de Fray Luis de León*, Limoges, 1943, pp. 576-578.

<sup>22</sup> Not a matter of verisimilitude, which is usually the enemy of truth. (On this, see the passages given by E. Sarmiento, "Clasificación de algunos pasajes . . .," *Bull. Hisp.*, 1937, XXXVII, 27.) The term "realism" is used here in a broad sense simply to indicate that, in criticism, Gracián is being forced to look for the source of valid poetry in the concrete particular facts of a given situation. Before this kind of criticism could appear at all adequate, poetry would have to take the long—but obvious—step of confining itself to the illumination of the past, to the

also a later emphatic mention of the duty of art to serve moral ends.<sup>23</sup> Realism and didacticism are thus propped against a fundamental weakness. It is left however to a later century to subdue literature to these. Gracián leaves them out of his main theory, and we find him obstinately refusing, in particular cases, to give up the wit's autonomy. Thus he defends the conceit *por semejanza pura* against the charge of emptiness on the grounds that it is a *sutileza de la inventiva*.<sup>24</sup> The wit is in the last resort its own authority; and here, exactly as in the corrective tendencies just mentioned, we can see in preparation the subordination of literature to ends supposed to

poet's "emotion recollected in tranquillity." In his criticism, Gracián here foreshadows this development. But as an imaginative writer, he is still ruled by a forward-looking and adventurous imagination. Poetry for him at once explores and "creates"; its truth is always something newly arrived at.

The demands of invention and truth are squared figuratively in an interesting passage which appears however to make reality wait upon thought: *La materia es el fundamento del discurrir; ella da pie a la sutileza. Están ya en los objetos mismos las agudezas objetivas, etc. (Ag., p. 374.)*

At other times, he adopts a purely emotional and subjective criterion: *El nervio del estilo consiste en la intensa profundidad del verbo (p. 359)*. This and similar remarks have been discussed by Romera-Navarro, in *HR*, 1943, XI, 127. They all beg the question of truth.

<sup>23</sup> . . . *pero siempre ha de atender el arte al fruto de la moralidad, que es el fin de lo dulce y entretenido, al blanco de un desengaño. (Ibid., p. 334.)* This remark comes belatedly in the *Agudeza*, and refers immediately to moral fables. Later he says: *Son las verdades mercadería velada, no las dejan pasar los puertos de la noticia y desengaño, y así han menester tanto disfraz para poder hallar entrada a la razón, que tanto las estima (p. 335)*. Disc. LV opens with an interesting parable to the same effect.

Art and the morality of *desengaño* thus meet in the conceit. This is what happens in the *Criticón*. But it is undeniable that the *Agudeza* first tries to make the conceit entirely self-sufficient and independent of morality. As he remarks in the preface to the *Criticón*, the *Agudeza* "censures"—by simply ignoring it for the most part—the aim of joining the useful and the delightful. But the grandiose aesthetic ambition that dictates the main theory of the *Agudeza* fails. As will be shown below, the conceit becomes something essentially enigmatic, and thus a lens which always partly obscures or distorts reality. All it can convey therefore, if it is somehow to keep its aesthetic adequacy—and that is the crux of the matter; Gracián still wishes it to keep this—is something itself imperfect. Gracián thus, as a moralist in the *Criticón*, confines himself to a content adequate to his form, and fixes his eye upon vice and folly, or at the most upon a rather negative and self-defensive prudence; the description of any generous goodness, or positive Christian charity, is virtually excluded. One has simply no knowledge of what or of how he thought of these latter when he was not being a wit; the man is not the style; but the fact is that *desengaño*, as he expresses it, is the brilliant marriage of fallen Poetry and fallen Man. See Sec. V.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.



be practical, we can detect the seed of later claims for the poet in rebellion as having authority purely in virtue of the fact that he is a poet. The *Agudeza* can justly be said to point towards such later developments because in it these tendencies are already distinct, but far from being reconciled in his criticism are kept apart—or perhaps one should say keep themselves apart, for it is always difficult to say how far a man like Gracián is a clever pleader and how far he is his own dupe.

But *paciencia, y barajar*. Gracián finds his actual situation far from desperate. If the claims of human beauty and human truth seem as distinct as they are imperious, it is precisely because they are human; and since they are thus relative and limited, each can be bettered to fit the other. If truth is to be looked for in the concrete situation, beauty also is known by its concrete manifestations. It is embodied in the literature of the past. But for that very reason it can be modified in practice, and Gracián is able to produce a practical solution of his difficulties: the style of the *Criticón*. The *Agudeza* is the prelude to the invention of a type of wit which differs from that analysed in it; and it shows the direction of his evolution as a writer. The conceit in its great variety is already the distinctive feature of the imaginative literature of the age into which he is born. Beauty in this form seduces and absorbs him, and from one point of view the Gracián of the *Agudeza* is simply the Renaissance poet making a last defence of the self-sufficiency of poetic truth, of the poet's old high liberty of conceit. But even as he does this he aims at a partial disengagement of the understanding from the forms in which wit is presented to him, for his attempt at a singularly objective study of the conceit of the past can mean nothing less. In this way he is able to work his escape from the wit of the past into that of his own *Criticón*. The process requires him finally to reach a certain witty disillusionment about wit itself, as a way of solving in a practical sense the problem of truth, which the *Agudeza* poses insolubly. This will be considered later. In the meantime it can be observed that in him the critic's analytical understanding knows little or nothing, by itself, of the heights that poetry once aspired to. In figurative language the glory can still be proclaimed; but once he leaves this and comes to the close examination of examples of the conceit, he becomes limited to the practical, the concrete. The *Agudeza* suggests a possibility of the philosophical understanding becoming fixed upon the material as a result of being first caught and transformed in the literary adventures set on foot by the Renaissance. The prosaic windmill behind the giant of poetry.

II. INDUCTIVE METHOD. Gracián attempts to circumvent his difficulties by means of a partly inductive approach.

*Fácil es adelantar lo comenzado; arduo el inventar, y después de tanto, cerca de insuperable*<sup>25</sup>—as a theorist of wit, Gracián thought of himself as advancing over unbroken territory; and he warns us at the outset of the difficulty he finds in his task. For the ancients, he tells us, produced no theory of wit. He is forced to go his own way and attempt something original, producing a study which Menéndez y Pelayo—who for the rest has some praise for it—might well consider quaint.<sup>26</sup> It is true that he occasionally refers to the opinions of others, notably in the case of *agudeza por semejanza*; but these opinions are mentioned relatively late in the argument; they concern only one minor question which does not affect the main theory; and they are not attributed to anyone by name, nor argued about at length. With some detachment, Gracián briefly states a case, and pursues his own path. The path is from the beginning very much that of the empiricist. *Déjase percibir, no definir, y en tan remoto asunto, estítese cualquiera descripción*:<sup>27</sup> we are to expect the use of terms with a certain indefiniteness of content; and we can also expect many occasional and disconnected statements, describing different facets of the conceit as they reveal themselves most clearly in particular examples. His chief labour is devoted to the collection, classification, and description of as many types of conceit as possible; and the names which he gives to these types have primarily a descriptive value, being determined by whatever is the most obvious "artificial" feature in each case. Thus in a typical conceit of *proporción*, such as Góngora's sonnet, "Árbol de cuyos ramos fortunados,"<sup>28</sup> the poet's skill lies in linking images—*árbol, gusano, pajarillo*, to choose a few of them—which fit together without surface opposition; but in another type the art lies obviously in the use of an antithesis; this type will then be called an *improporción*. Similarly, if the wit appears in a simile, it will be labelled *semejanza*. And so with every case; the names used are primarily descriptive. But at the same time, they have a less superficial value, which is greatest by far at the beginning, in the case of the conceit of proportion, and diminishes as he goes on to points of detail. His final aim is to discover the essential form of wit. Through all his collected types, as though superimposed on each other, he discerns

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 520 sqq.

<sup>27</sup> *Ag.*, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. Quoted in full below, Sec. IV.



a key-pattern; but in his exposition he tries to give us this at the beginning instead of at the end. The conceit of proportion is meant at once as a distinct type of conceit and as a revelation of the essential art of wit. In one way or another it can be said to contain all the rest.<sup>29</sup> The whole classification, and the order of treatment of types, is itself a large-scale analogue of the conceit. Gracián's empiricism remains that of a wit; and as the critic collects and analyses, it is the wit which devises a containing frame.

III. *CORRESPONDENCIA, PROPORCIÓN, IMPROPORCIÓN.* Gracián is pertinacious, and faithful to experience. He uses available terms as best he may. *Correspondencia* in his definition is something basic. It refers to the reality expressed by all conceits, of whatever type. But the term is also used more particularly of the first main class of conceits, which he calls conceits *de correspondencia y proporción*. *Proporción* as a form thus has an affinity with *correspondencia* as a reality.

What this implies is perhaps best elucidated by considering first an example, a useful special case; a syllepsis, which for him is a conceit:

cuando del monte al prado  
bajaba sus tristezas y ganado.<sup>30</sup>

This is given by Gracián in the third of his introductory Discourses as an obvious example of *correspondencia y conformidad entre los extremos objetivos del concepto*,<sup>31</sup> i.e., it belongs to the type later called *de correspondencia y proporción*; although it is not, as most of these are, constructed in fact by the continuation of a trope—which makes it convenient for the present purpose. It is easy to see why it should be classed as a conceit of proportion, since its art consists in the introduction, by the word *bajaba*, of a kind of equality between the different objects *tristezas* and *ganado*. An equality comprising difference is a kind of proportion.<sup>32</sup> But now suppose one tried to state the difference, a difference that the presence of the word *bajaba* forces upon the reader. (Strictly, this is not to describe the conceit or its meaning, but to produce a possible mental consequence of it.) Inevitably, one begins by a negation which leads

<sup>29</sup> Even *improporción*, "el otro extremo en este modo de agudeza." (*Ibid.*, p. 38.)

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>32</sup> Visible proportion has already been associated with *consonancia*, which, on the plane of feeling, is a mixture of *lo dulce y lo agrio*. See note 13.

to the statement of a distinction between the materiality of *ganado* and the immateriality of *tristezas*. But distinctions can be presented, if a certain kind of emphasis is desired, through a direct contrast, a literary antithesis. In that case the conceit would be classed as an improporition: *muero porque no muero*. Thus the conceit of improporition differs from that of proportion only in a secondary sense. It bears nearer the surface a point of difficulty that is present in all conceits and that in the direct rationalisation of the conceit appears as a negation; but in a more profound sense it is a proportion as much as the other. A poetic, an "artificial" proportion, as Gracián would say, which is that of all conceits as poetic mental acts, and which in some way expresses the *correspondencia* of his definition. This is the proportion of beauty, which is something essential underlying the more superficial descriptive *proporción* and *improporción* of his classification. It is in discussing precisely the conceit of improporition that Gracián comes nearest to a clear statement of this point:

Nace de la proporción la hermosura, no siempre de la improporción en el hecho; pero el notarla en el concepto, es perfección.<sup>33</sup>

Like so many sentences in the *Agudeza*, this reads like a note-book jotting. But it seems clear that the conceit of improporition, since presumably it is beautiful, must owe its beauty to some more profound proportion. As for its surface antithesis, the source of that may be easily discovered in the facts of the situation, or rather the situation may seem to force it upon one, as is the case with the example from St. Teresa; although the conceptist of sufficient skill will win it from less promising circumstances. Wit is in any case ambidextrous, he says, and can produce diverse forms as occasion serves.<sup>34</sup>

But in what way is this fantastic proportion true? Gracián here speaks, not of truth or of *correspondencia*, but of *hermosura*. And previously, when he made the general affirmation that the *correspondencia* belongs to all conceits, his reasons were a little lame:

Esta correspondencia es genérica a todos los conceptos, y abraza todo el artificio del ingenio, que aunque éste sea tal vez por contraposición y disonancia, aquello mismo es artificiosa conexión de los objetos.<sup>35</sup>

*Todo el artificio, artificiosa conexión.* The emphasis is now on human skill, and again the question of truth is by-passed. The conceit of

<sup>33</sup> *Ag.*, p. 34.

<sup>34</sup> See note 42, last quotation.

<sup>35</sup> *Ag.*, p. 19.

improportion, with its immediate antithesis, its more obvious ingredient of human bewilderment or even wilfulness, makes a simple relationship between *concepto* and real *correspondencia* impossible to pretend. Reality thus becomes essentially mysterious. There is some reality out of which the conceit is born; but the conceit is variable and a work of art. It becomes then something that, having begun as a means to reality, is now itself a distinct psychological reality which is still held to have some kind of link with exterior objects; a link however which its own variability makes it impossible to describe clearly, and one of which Gracián is more concerned to affirm the presence than to investigate the nature; because, one concludes, its presence is the conceptist's license, and Gracián is above all a conceptist.

The vocabulary of the *Agudeza* has a sufficiently obvious scholastic cast, and it is easy to see Gracián's *correspondencia* as deriving ultimately from the scholastic idea of real proportional relations.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> For a brief exposition of the classical scholastic theories of knowledge and being, see M. R. Phillips, *Modern Thomistic Philosophy*, London, 1935, II, 105-106 and 162 sqq.

Gracián can be said to assume, in a vague and imaginative way, something resembling the old metaphysic. But any chance of his making a clear relationship between *concepto* and real *correspondencia* seems to have gone. Basically, the 'thought' of wit is something felt. The *ingenio* modifies this, controls it and gives it a certain form. The *ingenio* is a transformed understanding which, being superior to experience, replaces the metaphysical understanding; but since its essential function is in fact this forming and ruling of materialised thought, it is at once in difficulties when it is asked to go beyond this to metaphysical reality, which is for it simply an unknown. It follows that it is impossible for Gracián to state clearly the relationship between the thinking of wit and the *correspondencia* he holds it to express. Further, the mind, accustomed to relate its activities to extra-mental reality, finds itself losing clear grasp of the forms of its own thinking. Because the real becomes obscure, so does the form of wit itself. It thus has to be approached empirically. But that Gracián should look for proportionality in it at all cannot surely be explained except as due to the persistence, within wit, of habits of thinking bred originally in metaphysics.

Gracián's outlook is thus quite consistent, though it is difficult to state its debt to a former metaphysic. It is however easier to connect *correspondencia* with later theories. Being itself unanalysed, and simply posited as a source in reality for every successful harmony that the wit produces, it becomes as vague as it is compendious. If wit were given up and replaced by analytical thinking, a complete scepticism might result about the validity of all mental relationships.

Such critical scepticism, in Gracián's case, can at the most be regarded as a possibility that is not allowed to become actual. For in the *Agudeza* the failure to examine *correspondencia* preserves a distinction between it and the conceit; and this distinction between witty 'thought' and reality, far from being obliterated is intensified in the *Criticón*. (See Sec. VI.) The real is imaginatively removed by the wit further and further from its thought, and thus from possible criticism; at the same time it is magnified in relation to that thought.

But if Gracián's aim were to relate wit to classical scholasticism he could in any case only do so by a psychological elaboration of the subjective aspect of poetic knowledge (and by implication of all knowledge) that his own absorption in wit would in fact preclude. Someone else would have to do it for him. The whole question of the relationship of Gracián's critical thought to scholasticism, and more particularly to the Spanish scholasticism of his day, with its considerable differences, in the matter of knowledge, from the doctrines of St. Thomas,<sup>37</sup> needs more expert attention. But it might be pointed out here that Gracián works in a very different field from that of St. Thomas. His real need is for some adequately circumscribed theory of aesthetic intuition in the concrete, which the classical outlook did not provide. It would of course be wrong to think of Gracián as labouring under a simple misconception; since quite apart from the fact that he is not alone in the seventeenth century in making some kind of intuition pre-eminent as a mode of knowing, the basis of his theory is an attempt to respect the fact that the conceit is primarily, for him, an experience. When he comes to consider the conceit in detail, the situation is resolved in this way: the conceit is seen now, not as a *concepto*, but as an *agudeza*, a single complex object, corresponding to a past completed experience; and in it Gracián is able to point to a multiplicity of relationships which he can then use to describe it. But the original intuitive *concepto* escapes close definition. Gracián, being a wit, is a kind of poet; and poets are not metaphysicians. But he is an observer of extraordinary acuteness and patience. The fantastic proportion of the conceit cannot in any case be defined rigidly, but must be left as something unstable, precisely because it does vary in each concrete instance; and it is with concrete instance that he lives.

The general scholastic flavour of the vocabulary serves then only to emphasise the obvious point that, if Gracián is anyone to go by, seventeenth century wit is peculiarly "metaphysical" only in the sense that it is the tomb of a metaphysic; and that the problems bred within it are not such as this metaphysic in its classical formulation can cope with directly. The wit tends to run into the question of knowledge in a new form. He tends to find himself confronted with a difficulty in relating a successful poetic experience to exterior reality. There is the bright world of poetry, and beyond it something obscure. By a naive rationalisation of this situation—

<sup>37</sup> For a brief note, see M. de Wulf, *History of Medieval Philosophy*, tr., London, 1926, p. 300.

which becomes more uncomfortable in proportion as wit succeeds in making itself unique in the world of knowing—the problem of knowledge in general would become no longer the old one of universals, but that of modern epistemology. Gracián's *Agudeza* shows that such a catastrophic rationalisation does not take place—if indeed it ever could without a considerable lapse of time—and that the alternative to wit that does offer itself to him is that of a practical empiricism, commonsense, collection of specimens; a dull empiricism admittedly, to go hand in hand with the unstable brilliance of poetic truth.

IV. ANALYSIS OF TYPES. Gracián's fullest analysis, that of the key-type, *proporción*, is less an analysis than a curious kind of picture of the conceit in the process of being peered into by the eye of Gracián:

Es el sujeto sobre quien se discurre y pondera, ya en conceptuoso panegiri, ya en ingeniosa crisis, . . . uno como centro de quien reparte el discurso líneas de ponderación y sutileza a las entidades que lo rodean; esto es, a los adjuntos que lo coronan, como son sus causas, sus efectos, atributos . . . y cualquier otro término correspondiente. Los va careando de uno en uno con el sujeto, y unos con otros, entre sí, y en descubriendo alguna conformidad o conveniencia, que digan, ya con el principal sujeto, ya unos con otros, exprímela, pónédela, y en esto está la sutileza.<sup>38</sup>

He thus starts with the finished conceit and regards the objects spoken of in it as having a prior relationship separable from the correlation finally produced; it is as if he were distinguishing between the prior historical objects and the finished work of art. But in fact, in seeing them as parts of the discourse, he has simply attributed to them relationships, such as of cause and effect, which belong to the correlation itself, and are really a part of the artifice of the conceit. He seems to peer through the surface of the conceit into an obscure region lying between the external figure and some deeper reality that it refers to—but perhaps this is pure illusion; perhaps all that happens is that the eye, trying an impossible task, loses its focus and then regains it, so that conceit, from being blurred, appears to crystallise out of a dark background. And nothing could better reveal his real position than this analysis, for it shows a mind, not merely trying to give technical rules for the making of conceits, or seeking to bring the conceit into accord with some given view of the universe, but one which, being caught up in wit, tries to look directly into the conceit and see what constitutes it and what direct

<sup>38</sup> *Ag.*, p. 25.



relationship with exterior reality it may have. From being at the best a high and noble vision, at the least a means of expression, poetry has become for him primarily an experience needing clarification; but reality shows itself as "lines of ponderation and subtlety" joining the parts. The conceit may come to seem no more than the reflection of the mind that makes it. One can see here the opportunity, even the compulsion, if wit is to be saved, for a Pope, supposing Spain had produced one, to fall back upon an old position, asking wit to give up its headstrong adventurousness and to restrict itself to finding the suitable form for the expression of a given "Nature," the truth of which is guaranteed in advance:

True wit is Nature to advantage dressed,  
What oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed;  
Something, whose truth convinc'd at sight we find,  
That gives us back the image of our mind.<sup>39</sup>

Gracián will not retreat. But the situation he has arrived at shows how close were the authors of "wild heaps of wit" to the age which turned against them.

But the immediate advantage of his way of regarding the conceit is that it allows one to view as simple the artificial proportion itself, to ignore the fanciful element in the argument of most conceits of this type, and to see the proportion as embodying a common-sense truth. Góngora's sonnet may be taken as an example:

Árbol de cuyos ramos fortunados  
las nobles Moras son quinas Reales,  
teñidas con la sangre de leales  
Capitanes, no amantes desdichados;  
En los campos del Tajo más dorados,  
y que más privilegian sus cristales,  
a par de la sublime palma sales,  
y más que los laureles levantados.  
Gusano de tus hojas me alimentos,  
pajarillo sosténganme tus ramas,  
y ampáreme tu sombra peregrino.  
Hilaré tu memoria entre las gentes,  
cantaré enmudeciendo ajenas famas,  
y votaré a tu templo mi camino.<sup>40</sup>

This is described as a combining of the poet's activity as a poet with the patronage he enjoys; and one can see easily enough that

<sup>39</sup> *Essay on Criticism*, II, 97-100.

<sup>40</sup> *Ag.*, p. 26.

its fanciful argument, correlating *árbol-hojas-gusano* and the rest, involves an analogy between these and the family with its dependent poet. The artificial proportion thus expresses something factual concerning the original historical objects. What however is not discussed is the reason for the argument's taking the form it does; for this would raise the question of why these images should be chosen, instead of others which could bear the analogy equally well; and thence the whole question of why a man should be compared with something different from himself. Difference would thus have to be treated as a factor in the total meaning.

The conceit of improportion, however, requires a different tactic—for Gracián is very much a tactician. He cannot here, as he could in the former case, rely on the presence of an analogy to escape the question of difference, precisely because the artificial correlation between the terms of the discourse is an antithesis. So he confines himself to saying, in general, that here "se busca . . . la oposición entre los extremos."<sup>41</sup> One is to assume merely that this conceit is true because the two relationships constituting it are true. But so they are, otherwise the whole figure becomes the purest nonsense. *Muero porque no muero*: the antithesis is inescapably accepted as such, while the *porque* has to be strong enough in the context of the whole poem to bear the strain of it. But there is no discussion of the meaning of the joining of the two.

This matter of difference is however by no means avoided. It is simply excluded from meaning. His experience of it does show, in his talk of "lines of ponderation and subtlety," where it is reflected in an image of the eager effort and wonder of the mind as it ranges over the terms of the extended figure.<sup>42</sup> It is expressed in terms of feeling and action, not of truth. But the conceit *por semejanza*—

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>42</sup> It is in the light of this that Gracián's general remarks about difficulty in the conceit must be understood. He does not praise complication for its own sake: *Pero no se puede negar arte donde reina tanto la dificultad. . . . Nace el hombre tan desnudo de noticias en el alma, como en el cuerpo de plumas; pero su industria, y su trabajo, le quitan con ventajas.* (*Ibid.*, p. 14.) The mind takes pleasure in this activity; and the greater the effort, the greater the prize and the delight: *Cuando esta correspondencia está recóndita, y que es menester discurrir para observarla, es más sutil, cuanto más cuesta. . . . Esto es propiamente conceptuar con sutileza . . .* (p. 27). *Mas si sólo el exprimir esta correspondencia y armonía . . . es sutileza y obra grande del pensar, ¡qué será cuando no se contente con eso sólo un grande ingenio, sino que pase adelante y llegue a realzarla?* (p. 30). The wit wrests what it can from its surroundings: *Todo gran ingenio es ambidextro, discurre a dos vertientes; y donde la ingeniosa comparación no tuvo lugar, da por lo contrario, y levanta la disparidad conceptuosa* (p. 108.) All his remarks on the subject are in this strain.

the *pons asinorum* of the whole work—raises this issue in a more awkward form; for in this case he has located the conceit in a simile, in an image presented more immediately and statically to the mind that contemplates it; and so the difference now tends to be visualised as a quality belonging to the object. The result is that he is now embarrassed by the question of meaning as he was not before. It would be no use pointing to commonsense resemblances, precisely because those belong to all similes, and are not enough for wit. It is interesting therefore to find him trying to point to some deeper and obscure metaphysical meaning. The subject is compared, he says, with some “otro término, como imagen, que le exprime su ser . . .”<sup>43</sup> But the phrase is not taken up, nor explained at all. It is even more interesting to find that in the end he is only able to make a fully confident theoretical defence of this type of conceit where he can point to some concrete element in its grounds—a “special circumstance” which modifies it and makes it different from other similes:

Comúnmente toda semejanza que se funda en alguna circunstancia especial, y le da pie alguna rara contingencia, es conceptuosa; porque nace con alma de conformidad, y se saca de la misma especialidad del objeto.<sup>44</sup>

But again the question of meaning is an embarrassment; exactly what is the connection between this special circumstance and the “misma especialidad del objeto” is not explained. He appears to be groping after the notion that the *ingenio* must deal always in the first instance with the object as existing at a particular time and place, and that it is only through this that it can attain its essence. One can only regard the argument, in the form it takes, as a sign of the real situation underlying the contemporary abolition of the distinction between essence and existence. But there is one thing he is sure of; namely that the conceit can in practice be recognised by a certain piquancy. The concrete, the feelings: here he feels on solid ground. He ends by saying that other similes are “dead without the piquancy” of this special foundation.

V. FATE OF THE SYMBOL. To be fully understood, the *Agudeza* needs to be related to the wit of the *Criticón*; but this style is the culmination of a long historical process that can only be touched on here. An essential point is a poetic adventurousness which Herrera

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65. See also previous essay, pp. 283–284.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

sees well developed and which Gracián eventually inherits and prolongs. The mental adventures that distinguish this whole movement are as real as the voyages of the navigators, with the same unforeseen results, the same unexpected profit and loss, the same possibilities even of danger and fear. Obviously, it is a mistake to suppose that the conceit, because it appears to a superficial analysis as a peculiarly intellectual art, is somehow safely under the charge of reason. On the contrary, for the mind in solitude the conceit may permit the awakening of symbols from which it may later recoil—or from which other minds may recoil. So in the case of Gracián's beloved Góngora: by paying its fee to a complaisant reason, taking advantage of available analogies and allusions to older poetry, the heavenly bull is born into the *Soledades*. The angry reaction of Quevedo is at bottom that of the moral Christian, concerned for the fate of this world, who hates Góngora's mythological kingdom and wishes to call men away from it.

Gracián comes late upon the scene, and it can be said that as an original writer he undertakes the stylistic reconciliation of what has gone before. But a good deal underlies this version of his task. His adventure demands the devising of a new conceit from the wit of the past; and as a step towards this he passes in review the whole known world of wit and tries to draw out of it a common essential form. In his period, he could not, even if he wished, do this without touching on the question of truth; but when in the *Agudeza* he postulates truth to exterior reality in the conceit he is not propounding a question which his criticism must stop to settle, nor preparing to plunge into any metaphysical agony. Primarily, he is seeking license to go on being a wit. He wants an assurance that the rest of reality somehow dances to the same tune as he himself. This assurance is simply given to him by tradition, and far from trying to strengthen it he strains it hard. But the question of truth has arisen and cannot finally be avoided. It is met as he goes, along the path of the wit; and it is the wit that deals with it, in a manner conformable to itself.

It is a piquant fact that Gracián almost completely ignores Don Quixote.<sup>45</sup> For, if we are to believe Cervantes, Don Quixote suffered from literature; his hallucinations came from books. He is involved in a struggle with the literary symbol, which has become in his mind quite hypostatized and delivered from any stable and discoverable connection with the existent world of solid bodies. Nor have the

<sup>45</sup> See Romera-Navarro, *Crit.*, I, Introd., p. 50.

images that bewitch him any conscious metaphorical complexity, but the simplicity, vitality, and power of myths. Cervantes, whom Poetry had always enticed and often eluded, had already caricatured Gracián's disease; a disease of the times, which had also threatened him. It is evident enough from the *Agudeza* that the conceit—that is, the actual poetry of his predecessors—had become for Gracián at once a delight and a problem. It enveloped him. He tried to look directly through it and could not do so successfully. Poetry thus tends to obscure reality. But to become in any measure aware of this is to begin to be disillusioned with it. The movement from illusion to disillusion formerly belonged to the life of the passionate man, and was made the matter of poetry:

que yo sé bien por el ausente engaño  
juzgar deste presente el fin confuso;<sup>46</sup>

but now a similar movement invades the very means of expression. Content works through into form.<sup>47</sup> Gracián's practical problem is that of how to keep the old wit while transforming it so that it acquires—or perhaps it will only seem for a while to acquire—a new transparency and certainty of its aim. It appears that the transformation has to obey some obvious conditions. It cannot dissolve the real structure of the conceit. On the contrary, to avoid breaking into a stammer, this must be simplified, strengthened, and fixed. What happens in the case of Gracián is that it finds a new mode in which to continue to exist by becoming fixed as a subjective mental act. It is towards this end that we can see him working in the *Agudeza*, in which his recognition of a specific mental act which he calls the *concepto* is as clear as his desire to exalt it. The *concepto* bears the same relationship to the multitudinous forms of *agudeza* as water does to waves. But this withdrawal of the *concepto* to the side of subjective experience begins to sap vitality from its content considered as objective and as independent of it. The old and less subjective wit can thus all be reduced to one level; and, although the incidental judgments he passes on well-known authors are all succinct and sound, he is able to fill his *Agudeza* with examples curiously mixed in quality, and for that reason often disconcerting to the modern reader. About the general question of taste, he can be

<sup>46</sup> Herrera, Sonnet XXV.

<sup>47</sup> A phenomenon which seems to recur, when there is an attempt to make art too important as a means to reality. An obvious parallel is the way in which Romantic emotional subjectivism leads eventually to some kinds of poetry which are so private as to be almost incomprehensible except to initiates.



quite detached.<sup>48</sup> It is not that Gracián—of all people—is losing his literary tact and judgment. He is simply putting the wit of the past into the melting-pot, extracting what is for him its essence; and in the end he is to produce for us the strange and delicious virtuosity of the *Criticón*, in which he uses the most "trivial" and the most "weighty" of material in fascinating new combinations. Finally, the *Criticón* shows us that, in order to save this essence of wit, this subjective experience, it is upon the imagined object, the traditional symbol, that disillusion has to be thrown. And so it becomes ambivalent, infected with mistrust:

Eco vaticinante desde un escollo de flores;<sup>49</sup>

brilliant, elusive, ready to vanish in a twinkling:

Todo aquel encanto paró en canto y en responso, y los ecos de la vida en huecos de la muerte.<sup>50</sup>

It can then be made to serve the moralist's purpose of vividly representing vice and folly as being at once real and yet somehow lacking in full reality of being. The *Criticón* has pleasant nightmares, full of fools on the point of being whisked away into nothingness. But it must be left to another occasion to examine in greater detail the difference between this wit and that analysed by Gracián in the *Agudeza*, and to show how it derives, as a form, from the critical situation revealed in that work.

VI. IDEAS OF REALITY. The change in the value of the symbol has important repercussions. It reflects interestingly upon the question of freedom in the development of writers in a given period to recall that a crystallisation of the conceit takes place also in the case of Gracián's contemporary, Calderón; but in a very different sense. Here it becomes, for the unsympathetic, static and over-rational. But it does so in order to permit a renewal of content. It enables Calderón to imagine a Segismundo who can then debate with clarity whether life is a dream or not; and the arguments used derive, not from any new discoveries of the wit, but from traditional Christian thinking. Calderón can thus meet his times more directly. But Gracián almost has to become a real-life Segismundo, the role

<sup>48</sup> *Ag.*, p. 18: *Resaltan más con unos que con otros los extremos conocibles, si se unen, y el correlato, que es realce de sutileza para uno, es lastre para otro.* The pun which illustrates this point is excellently chosen: *Flamma mea*; Ovid's inscription, we are told, upon an onyx sent to his lady (*Onyx = O, Nix!—Oh, snow! My flame!*).

<sup>49</sup> *Crit.*, II, 308.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 127.

with which he has to become disillusioned being that of the man who can see through all roles; detached and strong, but all the time afraid of being deceived; while as a writer he lives on literature, endlessly drawing up traditional images in order to involve them in a conceit which will make them consciously enigmatic.<sup>51</sup>

But the mind, having seemed to deliver itself so far, stumbles into another possible defeat; for in the nature of things, it is hard for it to remain steady in the face of the enigma. In the moment of success, the conceit is wonderful and enchanting; but at other times the mind sinks, it seems that all that is certain in the conceit is the self that makes it, and so wit has to descend from being the work of angels to being the plaything of children. And then it is prepared to seek stability by finding reasons for accepting its fate. Early in the *Criticón* Andrenio, who is being instructed by Critilo in the glory and order of creation, asks why the stars were not arranged by God in a more regular and pleasing pattern. Part of Critilo's answer is this:

La otra disposición que tú dices fuera afectada y uniforme: quédese para los juguetes del arte y de la humana niñería. De este modo, se nos haze cada noche nuevo el cielo y nunca enfada el mirarlo, cada uno proporciona las estrellas como quiere.<sup>52</sup>

This passage, the significance of which becomes all the greater when we remember how Gracián, in his Discourse on *proporción*, visualises the conceit itself as a kind of constellation, is a piece of wit, not an abstract critical conclusion. It is a witty *contrapunto de un singular desengaño*<sup>53</sup> thrown, not upon the stars, but upon the old poetic symbolism of the stars, as reflecting the perfect order of Being. The poet, for Gracián, is essentially one who sees; what he sees is a pattern; but the pattern is now always unstable, constantly shifting (shifted in the mind; God waits), backed by an inscrutable reality; and its obscure relationship to this is now a constant but indefinable part of its meaning. From one point of view this inscrutable, the dark side of the older poetic Absolute—or better perhaps its dark descendant, revealing a forgotten taint of the blood—, has simply the obvious function of leaving the imagination free while defending the universe finally from the projection upon it of the ambivalence of the symbol. It stops reality from becoming a tale told by an idiot; and against its dark background the moralist

<sup>51</sup> Cf. also M. Romera-Navarro, *El claroscuro graciano*, HR, 1941, IX, 127.

<sup>52</sup> *Crit.*, I, 125.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 339.

can continue to take his pleasure in showing how men in fact stagger from one passionate idiocy to another. In the long run, of course, its constant conscious association with this unknown is bound to weaken the symbol, and a new and more urbane poetry will be glad to see it banished, or chained in a formula; though it will eventually burst forth again and possess the mind of the romantic.

That this exorcism of the symbol can take place painlessly becomes evident immediately the nature of this inscrutable is more fully considered; for it has another and most important aspect, in which it appears, not as a barrier to knowledge, but as a virtually infinite possibility of knowledge of a kind. Wit still looks forward; it expects each day fresh mental experiences; and as it makes each step, wishes to be sure there remains more ground to cover. We have seen this already in the *Agudeza*. We have seen how Gracián the critic, in examining individual conceits, points always to factual truth in them; and how he is prepared to abide by discoverable and describable facts alone, to leave questions undecided where necessary, to use terminology that is often imprecise but always suggestive, simply because he is not yet sure of the nature of the object—in short, there is in him much of the characteristic spirit, though not the method or matter, of the empirical scientist. The unknown is a real unknown; not a mere figment of wit, but a possibility for intellectual adventure in the future. And so, with the change in the form of wit, a new undeveloped content comes to be created, a hinterland glimpsed, whose reality belongs to a time to come.

These two aspects of the relation in Gracián's mind of wit to reality are not opposed directly to each other, but are as it were at right angles. The poetic present becomes dark in its immediate relation with the timeless in order to become promising in its relation to the future. Gracián oddly belongs to two ages at once. That Spain herself is in fact fated to a decline in greatness does not make it any less true that Gracián stands on the brink of a new European period in which the vast imaginative empiricism of the Renaissance, exhausting at last in its progress a universe of inherited poetic symbols, is about to confine itself quite within the sphere of the physical, in which it establishes for itself the "secure method of a science," and can envisage limitless future progress. Gracián himself is still held by the past world of poetry, with its inescapable deposit of a belief in a reality outside that of time, and in the necessity of attaining it; but though unable to relinquish this poetry, he progressively undermines its relation to the permanent. Gracián is very progressive; and like many who know how to handle a situ-

ation, he really gives in to it, releasing forces that can destroy from within. It is this undermining that constitutes for us now the real core of his pessimism, which is one of the most disheartening for a modern literary sensibility; because we have to accept it whilst being unable to assimilate its cheerful confidence in a mental future which has become our own past.

Gracián thus meets in the *Criticón* the problem of truth in wit posed by the *Agudeza*. There arises in consequence a shift in attitude to the whole work of art. The character of a merely possible world—an imaginative world as opposed to the everyday world of practical living—which is that of nearly all seventeenth century literature, becomes now more salient and necessary than it was before. Between the self and the work, and the work and exterior reality, a gulf appears. Seventeenth century literature in advance makes nonsense of so many attempts to rationalise it into "philosophy" by presenting what is in the first place an invented world, not an interpreted one. The author is thus able to claim that his actors were all spirits, or parts of a dream, and is able to exploit the distinction between imagination and reality as occasion requires. Thus he can use it defensively whenever the results of his imaginative adventures seem dangerous or unfortunate or inadequate or too good to be true; or a late dramatist like Calderón, dealing with truths which are acknowledged from the beginning to be beyond the reaches of imagination alone, can have his allegories proclaim from the stage that they are only allegories. In the case of Gracián, the escape from the trap of poetry requires the new world of wit to be one each step in whose realisation was after all taken only by the imagination, not by the real man. Wit can never now be taken as conclusive, as representing any permanent order of reality; it has validity only as it occurs to the mind, loses it as it passes. In the long run, of course, since the writer preserves his identity, it is his own person and fate that become the real unifying features of the work; an unrevealed and, in a strict sense, unconscious self dictates its themes and their variations. But consciously, Gracián is well defended. Critilo, before his creation, may have been a possible Gracián; but the possibility is immediately removed by his creation, when he becomes detached from his author. Gracián is not a possible Critilo. Don Quixote's life was a kind of dream, but his author woke him to sanity, and let him die. Critilo however is never given so much life that he can die. Not only his life, but his immortality on the island, is rounded in a sleep.

Gracián's adventure thus precipitates no abstract epistemological problem in his own real life; for it was a prior condition of the adventure that it should overleap it. Critilo can act, when the occasion requires it, the part of a metaphysical agnostic glancing into a metaphysical void. Why not? The wit is eager to see tomorrow, with its fresh imaginative patterns; and the metaphysical unknown is still thought of as real: knowledge is subjective but not empty, and is somehow nourished by the unknown. Wit thus in a flash produces, in its own fashion and within its own sphere, something analogous to the position Kant tries to establish in abstract philosophy, once the continued progress of the physical sciences has brought confidence and opportunity.<sup>54</sup>

But though Gracián thus hands himself over to the future, the need for permanence must assert itself. The appropriate symbol is ready to hand: that of the wheel of time. Revolution, Gracián in the *Criticón* warns his successors, is circular. One may perhaps think this his greatest mistake. It completes, however, a neat scheme of the universe. And that is the significant point. Gracián is only unsystematic if one thinks of him as something he never meant to be: an abstract philosopher. As a wit, who sees and imagines, he is simply another of the (essentially solitary) *faiseurs de systèmes* of the seventeenth century. The makers of abstract systems have been accused of destroying poetry; in the same way, the imaginative systematiser leaves fragmented, outside wit, the world of abstract thought. But why blame one rather than the other? One kind of system is quickly attacked and dissolved by scepticism; so also the world of wit is destroyed by the safe-minded neo-classic of the next age.

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<sup>54</sup> Only an analogy is intended here. Historically, Gracián's attitude might be seen as deriving from that represented by Nicholas of Cusa. Cf. R. I. Markus, "Method and Metaphysics," *Dominican Studies*, 1949, II, 356-384, esp. 358 ff.



## UNAMUNO Y LA 'ENFERMEDAD DE FLAUBERT'

A Emilio Gómez Orbaneja

GOZÓ en su vida Don Miguel de Unamuno de una magnífica salud y los achaques de la ancianidad apenas si le importunaron en sus postreros años. Y hasta la muerte se le presentó, el último día de 1936, no como enfermedad, sino como muerte, de noche y al amor del brasero, tal como él se lo había figurado en alguna de sus poesías. "Nunca he estado mejor," parece haber repetido antes de cerrar los ojos para siempre. Los dolores del cuerpo y del alma, que se dan, por otra parte, en abundancia en la obra de Unamuno, proceden de categorías superiores a las de cualquier desarreglo del organismo humano. Y sentimientos y conceptos acaban por dolerle al hombre de carne y hueso como miembros lastimados o enfermos: "Como a otros les duele una mano, o un pie, o el corazón, o la cabeza, a Spinoza le dolía Dios," escribe Unamuno en el primer capítulo de *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida*. El mismo repitió muchas veces, de palabra y por escrito, algo parecido a lo que dice esta frase de *Andanzas y visiones españolas*: "A mí, que tanto me duele España, mi patria, como podía dolerme el corazón o la cabeza. . . ." Y hablando de Joaquín Costa, recientemente fallecido entonces, combina e identifica, y no al acaso, la dolencia que le llevó a la tumba y el dolor de España que sentía hasta los tuétanos el patriota muerto: "Cuando le dolió el cuerpo y el alma, empezó a dolerle España en ellos. . . ." Después de todo, nada puede extrañar cuando sabemos que Unamuno proclama convencido, casi al empezar la obra que mejor expresa su pensamiento, que "la conciencia es una enfermedad."

El viejo sano y fuerte que fué el Don Miguel de que guardamos memoria tuvo, sin embargo, un momento de su niñez en que anduvo delicaducho y enfermizo. Unamuno, recapitulando una adolescencia agitada por un sinnúmero de lecturas y problemas, escribe lapidariamente en *Recuerdos de niñez y mocedad*: "Mi cuerpo iba debilitándose." El Pachico Zabalbide de *Paz en la guerra* nos da mucho de aquel Miguel de entonces que entraba "en la pubertad enclenque y canijo, presa de una renovación interior que le consumía." Pero en este personaje de su primera novela (en el que tantos atisbos hay del que ha de ser nuestro Unamuno) encontramos no sólo testimonio de la debilidad del cuerpo de aquella época (a la que se sobreponía

una voluntad de triscar por los montes que rodean Bilbao), sino también síntomas claros de otra enfermedad que Unamuno iba con el tiempo a diagnosticar, y diagnosticarse, bautizándola a la manera de uno de esos doctores que descubren unos gérmenes y los dejan indisolublemente unidos a un nombre en los tratados de patología. Volviendo de una excursión, Pachico discute con Ignacio, el hijo del chocolatero Pedro Antonio Iturriondo, en un chacolí, después de la merienda. Se empeña "en aturdirle y marearle, soltando las mayores paradojas y exagerando sus ideas." Todos tienen razón y no la tiene nadie. "Un partido es una necedad," concluye. Es Ignacio el que siente lo que la actitud espiritual de su amigo denota: "A Ignacio le hería en lo vivo la petulancia de tratar a todos de imbéciles y de ver en todos tontos y no pillos."<sup>1</sup> Vemos iniciarse, in-nominada aún, pero pujante ya en los años mozos, una enfermedad crónica de la que sufrió Unamuno, con vivos y sinceros padecimientos, a lo largo de su vida: la "enfermedad de Flaubert."

Es fácil adivinar que esta "enfermedad de Flaubert" nada tiene que ver con el "mal de Flaubert," los supuestos ataques de epilepsia del novelista francés o las crisis histéricas que le producía su temperamento emotivo, preocupación de tantos médicos y eruditos flaubertianos.<sup>2</sup> Se trata aquí de la aversión que Gustave Flaubert tuvo a la tontería, a la estupidez humana. De las repetidas lecturas de la obra de éste, debilidad suya, sacó Unamuno elementos para mirarse por dentro y estudiar mucho de sus relaciones espirituales con el prójimo. El análisis de sus propios sentimientos está hecho, en diversas ocasiones, en función de textos de Flaubert:

Hay una cosa sobre todo, que siempre me ha atraído hacia él, y es lo que sufría de la tontería humana. Sí, comprendo, más que comprendo, siento, ese sentimiento que en *Bouvard y Pécuchet* le hace decir: "Entonces se le desarrolló una lamentable facultad (*une faculté pitoyable*), la de ver la estupidez y no poder ya tolerarla." En francés tiene más fuerza la palabra *bêtise*. Y en 1880 escribía a su amiga madama Roger des Genettes: "He pasado dos meses y medio absolutamente solo, como el oso de las cavernas, y, en suma, perfectamente bien; verdad es que no viendo a nadie no oía decir tonterías. La insoportabilidad de la tontería humana ha llegado a ser en mí una *enfermedad*, y aun me parece débil la palabra. Casi todos los humanos tienen el don de "exasperarme" y no respiro libre-

<sup>1</sup> *Obras selectas*, Madrid, Ed. Pléyade, 1945, p. 367.

<sup>2</sup> Véase un resumen de estas cuestiones en E. Allain, *Le mal de Flaubert*, Paris, 1928; y en un apéndice de R. Dumesnil, *Gustave Flaubert*, Paris, 1932, p. 471 y ss., titulado "La maladie et la mort de Flaubert."

mente más que en el desierto." Lo comprendo, y aun diré más, aunque se me tome a petulancia: conozco esa enfermedad. . . .<sup>3</sup>

En el ensayo *Leyendo a Flaubert*, del que procede esa cita, reconocía Unamuno que la raíz de ese sentimiento, de esa "enfermedad," no era tal vez más que soberbia. Pero el ensayo termina con un "¡oh, santa soledad!" con el que bendice la posibilidad de meterse en casa y evitar así las tonterías de unos y de otros. Y es que soberbia y soledad son distintivos de sentimientos de orgullosa aristocracia de aquellos que se creen superiores intelectualmente y se aíslan del mundo encastillándose en su yo. El romanticismo hizo culto de esos sentimientos, y un estudio de R. Canat, que dedica a Flaubert algunas páginas, resume en el título su significado: *Une forme du mal du siècle: Du sentiment de solitude morale chez les romantiques et les parnassiens* (Paris, 1904). Los estudiosos de la personalidad y obra de Flaubert han puesto de manifiesto la base romántica del que se considera creador del realismo literario moderno. El libro de E. Seillière<sup>4</sup> concretó en varios puntos de la obra de Flaubert el espíritu romántico de alguien movido por sentimientos místicos e irracionales. F. Nowak<sup>5</sup> descubrió, además de otros elementos románticos en la obra flaubertiana, todo un "romantische Gefühlswelt" del escritor. Hasta lo que se consideró condenación moral de descabelladas ilusiones románticas se explica hoy por ese hondo romanticismo suyo. El "Madame Bovary, c'est moi!" es un reto lanzado contra los buenos "burgueses" que no comprenden a su heroína.<sup>6</sup> La historia literaria del futuro descubrirá también sin duda en Unamuno profunda raigambre romántica (anti-intelectualismo, desconfianza de la razón, primacía de un indefinible "sentimiento," afición a las creaciones lingüísticas del pueblo, etc.). El aislamiento moral de los románticos, que encuentra póstumos reflejos en la personalidad y en la obra de Flaubert y de Unamuno, puede ser la explicación de la soberbia y la soledad que andan por debajo del horror a la "bêtise humaine" de que ambos adolecieron.

<sup>3</sup> *Leyendo a Flaubert*, ensayo recogido en *Contra esto y aquello*, anterior, por lo tanto, a 1912 (véase *Ensayos*, II, Madrid, Ed. M. Aguilar, 1942, p. 973).

<sup>4</sup> *Le romantisme des réalistes. Gustave Flaubert* (2ª ed.), Paris, 1914.

<sup>5</sup> "Gustave Flaubert als Romantiker," *Romanische Forschungen*, 1928, XLI/XLII, 100 y ss.

<sup>6</sup> Compárese E. Lerch, "Flaubert als Romantiker," *Sonntagsbeilage zur Vossischen Zeitung*, n.º 89, 18/II/1917, resumido en E. E. Freiennuth von Helms, *German Criticism of Gustave Flaubert*, New York, 1939, p. 59. Véanse también las observaciones de H. Christensen, *Gustave Flaubert. En Studie over Fransk Romantik og Realism*, Kjöbenhavn, 1902, p. 26 y ss.

A Unamuno le preocuparon la soberbia y la soledad, y analizó en dos ensayos esos sentimientos, planteándose noblemente sus problemas, tratando de explicarse su esencia y de cercenar en aquello que él experimentaba lo que pudiera ser malsano y egoísta. De agosto de 1905 es su ensayo *Soledad*<sup>7</sup> en que intenta explicar cómo es el amor a la muchedumbre lo que le lleva a huir de ella. A solas, lejos del trato social, confiesa Unamuno sentirse hermanado con sus semejantes. Algo puede, sin embargo, leerse entre líneas: "Me interesan tanto los hombres y tan fuertemente se agita mi corazón cuando oigo sus ayes eternos, que no puedo resistir la representación del drama. . . ." El "drama" humano, o será mentira, o será estupidez. Por eso la soledad de los solitarios puede ser beneficiosa a todos y cada uno de los hombres, ya que les enseñará a vivir más íntimamente una vida auténtica y sincera. En el otro ensayo, algo anterior, de diciembre de 1904, *Sobre la soberbia*,<sup>8</sup> hace también Unamuno examen de conciencia: "Sólo odiamos, lo mismo que amamos, lo que en algo, y de una o de otra manera, se nos parece. . . . Y es que, de ordinario, lo que aborrezco en otros aborrezco por sentirlo en mí mismo; y si me hiere aquella púa del prójimo, es porque esa misma púa me está hiriendo en mi interior. Es mi envidia, mi soberbia, mi petulancia, mi codicia, las que me hacen aborrecer la soberbia, la envidia, la petulancia, la codicia ajenas." A una soberbia que es, en el fondo, humildad falsa y rebuscada, u orgullo ocioso y contemplativo, opone Unamuno el lanzarse a emprender una obra animosamente, con fe. Unamuno justificaba a un hombre que luchó y obró con ese espíritu, justificándose, al mismo tiempo, a sí mismo: "Fué un hombre realmente humilde, con la verdadera humildad, con la humildad del que se entrega y se reparte y no se reserva." Es decir, que Unamuno procuraba hacer virtudes de lo que pudieran ser lacras del alma, sentimientos que podían ser obscuro origen de las crisis de la "enfermedad de Flaubert."

En efecto, esa "enfermedad" fué una realidad en la vida de Flaubert. El epistolario del novelista, los testimonios de quienes le trataron y las investigaciones de los estudiosos flaubertianos nos hablan de la obsesión por la "bêtise humaine" que no sólo afectó a

<sup>7</sup> *Ensayos*, I, p. 673 y ss.

<sup>8</sup> En otro ensayo, de enero de 1905, *Los naturales y los espirituales*, dice también: "Me llega al alma oír decir una tontería o una vaciedad a un prójimo y quisiera ir a él y quitarle aquella tontería de la cabeza, de cualquier modo, a golpes de maza, con violencia. . . ." (*Ensayos*, I, p. 618).

<sup>9</sup> *Ensayos*, I, p. 603 y ss.

su sistema nervioso, sino que fué eje de su estética y de su producción literaria. Desde el libro de Emile Faguet, que se publica en 1899, viene fijándose la crítica en la importancia de esa "manie essentielle."<sup>10</sup> E. L. Ferrère, en el prólogo a su edición del *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, ha trazado esquemáticamente un cuadro de ideas de Flaubert sobre la estupidez de los hombres.<sup>11</sup> Y no hay obra ni ensayo dedicado a Gustave Flaubert que no aborde, en una u otra ocasión, lo que la "bêtise humaine" supuso para él desde su juventud hasta sus últimos años, lo que esa hipersensibilidad suya contribuyó a conformar su obra novelesca. *Le Garçon* fué el personaje esotérico que Flaubert, Le Poitevin y otros camaradas de juventud crearon para simbolizar en él toda la estupidez y los lugares comunes repetidos hasta la saciedad por unos y por otros. Maurice Du Camp y Flaubert se entretenían en los largos días de monótona navegación por el Nilo, durante su viaje a Oriente, jugando "au sheick," imaginando el tipo de *viejo*, "bourgeois," rentista, tonto solemne, con una conversación llena de ideas cristalizadas y tópicos insustanciales, con una manera de pensar rastrera, incapaz de ningún elevado idealismo.<sup>12</sup> Temprano es también el proyecto del *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, colección de "platitudes," de frases hechas que se pronuncian necesaria y dogmáticamente en determinadas ocasiones, de las vulgaridades que de palabra o por escrito se escapan en el diálogo y en los libros. El *Dictionnaire* quedó inédito hasta después de su muerte, aunque Flaubert pensó y trabajó en él a lo largo de su vida y se sintió atormentado más de una vez por su prólogo en el que iba a crucificar para siempre a la tontería humana. Solo, o ayudado por sus amigos, anduvo siempre a la caza de esas "idées reçues," de esas "niaiseries," y ni libros queridos ni compañeros dilectos se libraron del implacable cedazo.<sup>13</sup> En Homais, el boticario de *Madame Bovary*, debía Flaubert encarnar y poner en la picota algunas de esas ideas recibidas, aceptadas y repetidas, que hacen de un ser capaz de pensar un pobre imbécil.<sup>14</sup> Y, por fin, *Boward et Pécuchet*, su última novela, aunque proyectada

<sup>10</sup> Flaubert, Paris, 1899, p. 127. Compárense E. L. Ferrère, *L'esthétique de Gustave Flaubert*, Paris, 1913, p. 41, y P. Binswanger, *Die ästhetische Problematik Flauberts*, Frankfurt, 1934, p. 88.

<sup>11</sup> *Le Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, Paris, 1913, p. 11 y ss.

<sup>12</sup> Véase, en resumen, sobre todo ello E. Seillière, *op. cit.*, p. 100 y ss.; E. Maynial, *La jeunesse de Flaubert*, Paris, 1913, p. 296 y ss.; A. Thibaudet, *Gustave Flaubert*, Paris, 1935, p. 87 y ss.

<sup>13</sup> Véase M. Du Camp, *Souvenirs littéraires*, II (Paris, 1892), p. 393.

<sup>14</sup> Véase, por ejemplo, E. Maynial, *op. cit.*, p. 301; A. Thibaudet, *op. cit.*, p. 110 y ss.



muchos años antes, es el colofón de una vida que ha sufrido de la intolerable estupidez de sus semejantes y que quiere personificar en sus dos *bonshommes* sus odios y sus torturas íntimas.<sup>15</sup> La máxima de Chamfort, que sirve de lema al *Dictionnaire* ("toute idée publique, toute convention reçue, est une sottise, car elle a convenu au plus gran nombre"),<sup>16</sup> parece revelar una altanería romántica del que se aparta de una masa adocenada sin traza alguna de originalidad. Pero en el rencor de Flaubert contra la mediocridad y la ignorancia pretenciosa pudo haber otras razones: aspirar a cambiar un mundo indeseable en algo mejor. Flaubert había sufrido en el alma, y hasta en el cuerpo, de un largo padecimiento, que le producía a veces violentísimos ataques, y quería resarcirse en los últimos años con *Boward et Pécuchet*, libro que dejó inconcluso y que, como veremos, da la clave de cómo sintió la "bêtise humaine." Du Camp, el amigo de Flaubert, algo nos dice acerca de ello en sus *Souvenirs littéraires*:

Ce roman l'occupait exclusivement; il disait: "Ça, ce sera le livre des vengeances!" Vengeance de quoi? Je ne l'ai jamais deviné et ses explications à ce sujet ont toujours été confuses. . . . Vengeance de quoi? J'y reviens sans pouvoir me répondre; de la bêtise humaine sans doute, qui l'offusquait et qui le faisait rugir de fureur quand elle ne le faisait pâmer de rire. . . .<sup>17</sup>

Tal había sido la "enfermedad" que Flaubert arrastró consigo hasta más allá de la muerte. "La mort ne calma pas cette grande colère. Du fond de la tombe, le romantique impénitent lançait encore à la tête du bourgeois cette facétie énorme de *Boward et Pécuchet*," ha escrito un crítico francés.<sup>18</sup>

Aquella predisposición de Pachico Zabalbide de ver más tontos que pillos la encontramos de nuevo en el Unamuno que analiza los sentimientos de Flaubert: "Me ocurre lo que al pobre Flaubert: No puedo resistir la tontería humana, por muy envuelta en la bondad que aparezca. Dios me perdone si ello es algo perverso, pero prefiero el hombre inteligente y malo al tonto y bueno." Unamuno—

<sup>15</sup> Véase, por ejemplo, E. Faguet, *op. cit.*, p. 129; A. Thibaudet, *op. cit.*, p. 188 y ss.

<sup>16</sup> F. Madrid, *Genio e ingenio de Don Miguel de Unamuno*, Buenos Aires, 1943, p. 118, nos da como frase de Unamuno una versión libre de esta máxima: "Yo creo que toda idea pública ha sido una tontería desde el momento que ha gustado a la mayor parte."

<sup>17</sup> *Souvenirs littéraires*, II, p. 392.

<sup>18</sup> R. Doumic, "Les premiers écrits de Flaubert," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1909, LXXIX Année, t. LI, 453.

que revivió, uno a uno, sus pensadores y sus poetas—sentía con el hombre Flaubert que había derramado sus inquietudes en las páginas de sus obras y de sus cartas: “¿Véis al hombre? Yo no sólo lo veo, lo siento, y lo siento dentro de mí.” Y los sufrimientos de este hombre le enseñaron, en sus escritos y en sus personajes, todos los motivos y ocasiones de experimentar desgarradamente la estupidez de tantos y tantos otros hombres. En la lectura de Flaubert, decía Unamuno, “veréis al hombre cuya religión era la desesperanza y cuyo odio era el del burgués satisfecho de sí mismo, que cree conocer la verdad y gozar la vida, y os suelta una necedad cualquiera, a nombre de la fe o a nombre de la razón, amparándose en la religión o amparándose en la ciencia. ¿Es extraño que un hombre así, como el hombre Flaubert, el solitario de Croisset, padeciese la dolencia de la insoportabilidad de la tontería, de la *bêtise* humana?”<sup>19</sup>

Los años por los que Unamuno escribió el ensayo *Leyendo a Flaubert*, debieron ser una época en que esas lecturas del autor francés dábanle la consciencia de los síntomas de una enfermedad que podía darse en otros individuos en idénticas circunstancias y momentos. En agosto de 1911, baja Unamuno de las cumbres purísimas de su sierra de Gredos y encuentra en Salamanca el primer volumen de la correspondencia de Flaubert que un amigo le envía desde París. Lo hojea y exclama: “¡Pobre Flaubert! ¡Qué aguda, qué dolorosamente sintió la estupidez humana! ¡Cómo se [*sic*: léase *le*] dolió el burgués satisfecho de sí mismo, que cada mañana, mientras toma su café con leche y su pan con manteca, se informa de las noticias de la víspera!”<sup>20</sup> El conocimiento de la obra y del *tic* de “este hombre, en cuya alma repercutía más que en la de ningún otro la incurable tontería humana,” debía, sin embargo, datar de mucho antes. Precisamente empieza *Leyendo a Flaubert* con el recuerdo de algo que años ha había proclamado y que ofrece indudablemente relación con mucho del sentir flaubertiano: “Hace años, cuando empezaba a escribir para el público, dije que ‘repensar los lugares comunes es el mejor medio de librarse de su maleficio.’ . . .<sup>21</sup> A mí sigue pareciéndome tan claro como cuando lo for-

<sup>19</sup> *Ensayos*, II, p. 974, 976 y 977.

<sup>20</sup> *Andanzas y visiones españolas*, Madrid, 1922, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> En *Viejos y jóvenes* (diciembre 1902) había dicho: “Las consideraciones que voy a exponer en estas líneas son tan vulgares y tan obvias, que entran de lleno en el campo de las verdades de Pero Grullo. Mas he de repetir aquí por centésima vez—y espero no sea la última—lo que he dicho lo menos noventa veces, y es, que conviene refrescar lo que de puro sabido se olvida, y que el repensar los lugares comunes es el mejor medio que tenemos para librarnos de su maleficio” (véase *Ensayos*, I, p. 407).

mulé hace años." Y el gran Perogrullo y sus viejas y respetadas verdades fueron invocados—y no sólo en esta ocasión—, repensados por Unamuno, ya que así lo perogrullesco "pierde el maleficio de todo lugar común, que es el de fomentar nuestra pereza de pensamiento, sustituyendo una idea por una frase." Es significativo que en un ensayo de 1902, comentando su traducción de *La Revolución Francesa*, de Thomas Carlyle, dijera que en el libro de éste, entre metáforas, prosopopeyas, epifonemas, vaticinios y digresiones, "no faltan patochadas que podían haber ido a la colección de Flaubert," y hasta encuentra en él una cierta riqueza de "patochadas y solemnidades perogrullescas" sólo comparable a la que ofrece la obra de Victor Hugo.<sup>22</sup> Es decir, que Unamuno andaba ya por aquel entonces inquiriendo en sus lecturas, con manía flaubertiana, qué frases podrían formar parte de un catálogo de tonterías y vulgaridades.

El índice de la obra de Unamuno puede proporcionar por sí solo títulos que revelan suficientemente su reacción ante el espectáculo de la sensatez mediocre y satisfecha que, aun más que en los libros, se respira en el trato con las gentes, lo mismo en el mundo de las letras que en la vida cotidiana. Ensayos como *¡Ramplonería!*, *Vulgaridad*, *Un filósofo del sentido común*,<sup>23</sup> evidencian la persistencia del tema en su labor de publicista y una oposición violenta a toda manifestación hablada o escrita de pereza mental o de pensamiento sin altura. Hablando de Balmes (materia del tercer ensayo citado), al que Unamuno leyó en sus mocedades, destacaba un párrafo "que no carece de una cierta elocuencia vulgar y de lugares comunes—los propios del sentido común . . .," y en Balmes pensaba seguramente Unamuno cuando hace tronar contra el sentido común al filósofo Don Fulgencio de Entrambosmares, en uno de sus parlamentos a Apolodoro, en *Amor y pedagogía*, su primera novela.<sup>24</sup> La ramplonería del ambiente, el asentimiento y repetición de "viejas y borrosas imágenes," la incomprensión y repulsa de toda idea original y atrevida, en nombre de una lógica adocenada y burguesa, son hondamente sentidas por Unamuno que condena estas características de la

<sup>22</sup> *Ensayos*, I, p. 345.

<sup>23</sup> *Ramplonería* es un ensayo de mayo de 1905; *Vulgaridad* fué recogido en *Soliloquios y conversaciones* (1911); *Un filósofo del sentido común* forma parte de *Contra esto y aquello* (1912); véanse *Ensayos*, I, p. 655 y ss.; II, p. 595 y ss., p. 1029 y ss.

<sup>24</sup> Reproducido de la 2ª ed. de *Amor y pedagogía*, Buenos Aires, 1940, p. 80 y s. Entrambosmares concluye: "Y cuando oigas a alguien decir que es el sentido común el más raro de los sentidos, apártate de él; es un tonto de capirote."

"inteligencia, por esencia, presencia y potencia, ramplona" de los españoles y la vulgaridad perecedera de sus contemporáneos. Seguramente en estos primeros años del siglo en que se escribieron estos ensayos luchó Unamuno más que nunca por imponer sus ideas y sus peculiarísimas maneras literarias frente a un público reacio que calificaba las cosas del autor de extravagancias o disparates. En un ensayo-cuento, *La locura del Doctor Montarco*, mejor tal vez que en ninguna otra parte, expresó Unamuno sus sentimientos de entonces.<sup>25</sup> Unamuno, como su protagonista, se lanza a escribir, y su primer cuento, "entre fantástico y humorístico, sin descripciones y sin moraleja," choca con el medio. Montarco siente el mismo acceso de cólera, una crisis de la "enfermedad de Flaubert," y estalla:

¿Pero usted cree que voy a poder resistir mucho tiempo la presión abrumadora de la tontería ambiente? . . . Son ya cinco las personas que se me han acercado a preguntarme qué es lo que me proponía al escribir el cuento ése, y qué quiero decir en él y cuál es su alcance. ¡Estúpidos, estúpidos y más que estúpidos! . . . Este pueblo no tiene redención, amigo; está irremisiblemente condenado a seriedad y tontería que son hermanas mellizas. . . .

Unamuno debía ahogarse, como Montarco, entre "tontos constitucionales," entre gentes "estúpidamente graves" que soltaban "sensateces como puños de Pero Grullo," y como el Doctor del cuento debió sufrir al oír que le achacaban "que se tenía por un genio y a los demás tenía por pobres diablos." Con ideas que, como hemos visto, repitió en otro ensayo del mismo año, Montarco y Unamuno se defienden serenamente: "¿Soberbio yo? Sólo los tontos son de veras soberbios, y, francamente, no me tengo por tonto; no llega mi tontería a tanto. . . ."

En un cuento que Unamuno publica poco después<sup>26</sup> pueden verse qué técnicas literarias y qué armas empleaba, a la manera de Mon-

<sup>25</sup> *La locura del Doctor Montarco* (1904) fué recogido en la primitiva edición de *Ensayos*, IV (véase *Ensayos*, I, p. 485 y ss.). Sobre el valor autobiográfico de este opúsculo llamó la atención por primera vez E. R. Curtius, "Über Unamuno," *Neue Rundschau*, 1926, XXXVII: I, 166: "In einer Novelle *Der Wahnsinn des Dr. Montarco* hat Unamuno sich selbst stilisiert." Sobre otros aspectos importantes, véase mi estudio "Unamuno y Carlyle," *Cuadernos hispanoamericanos*, 1949, n° 10, 51 y ss.

<sup>26</sup> *Y va de cuento . . .* (1905), incluido en *El espejo de la muerte* (2ª ed.), Madrid, 1930, p. 53 y ss.; en él se cita con gran detalle la edición de la correspondencia de Flaubert, gran lectura de Unamuno en aquellos años. Para otros aspectos de la significación de este cuento véase también mi indicado estudio sobre "Unamuno y Carlyle."



tarco, en una obra escrita teniendo muy presente la estulticia provinciana: desprecio del argumento y del interés de la narración, salidas ingeniosas, humorismo, paradojas. . . . Principalmente, paradojas, cuya etimología aborda Unamuno en ese cuento para llegar a la conclusión de que paradoja casi quiere decir herejía. También en el citado ensayo sobre Balmes explica lo que para él supone la paradoja: "el más genuino producto del sentido propio," "el más eficaz elemento del progreso." En la historia del pensamiento humano, considerada como "conflicto y juego mutuo entre el sentido común y el propio," Unamuno había tomado el partido de la paradoja contra la perogrullada, contra el sentido común.

Tanto *La locura del Doctor Montarco* como *Y va de cuento* . . . — que así se llama—están escritos en el período de gestación de la *Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho*. En su reclusión, el Doctor Montarco lo que más lee es el *Quijote*. El director de la casa de salud dice que "si usted coge su ejemplar y lo abre al acaso es casi seguro que se abrirá por el capítulo XXXII de la parte II, en que se trata de la respuesta que dió Don Quijote a su reprensor, aquel grave eclesiástico que en la mesa de los duques reprendió duramente al caballero andante." En efecto, cuando se acercan a Montarco, éste está leyendo aquellas páginas del *Quijote* en que "el muy majadero y grave eclesiástico" llamó a Don Quijote "Don Tonto." Y piensa Montarco, como pensó siempre Unamuno al comentar y recordar ese pasaje, en el versillo veinticinco del capítulo V del Evangelio de San Mateo que dice: "Quien llamare tonto a su hermano, es reo del fuego eterno." Paradójicas, al parecer, estas ideas y asociaciones de Unamuno, revelaban su indignación contra los dómines, dogmáticos definidores de lo que era sensatez y cordura, que confundían la tontería con la sublime locura de un Don Quijote, y, en su estúpida soberbia, eran capaces de llamar tontos a los que no pensaban como ellos. El médico de Montarco defiende, lo mismo que Unamuno en su comentario al libro cervantino, la locura frente a los que prefieren el estancamiento de las ideas y niegan toda posibilidad de aventura al espíritu. En su glosa al capítulo XXXI de la segunda parte del *Quijote* dice Unamuno dirigiéndose a su héroe tan absurdamente insultado: "¡Don Tonto! ¡Don Tonto! ¡Y cómo te viste tratar, mi loco sublime, por aquel grave varón, cifra y compendio de la verdadera tontería humana!"<sup>27</sup>

Arremetía aquí en este libro Unamuno contra un símbolo y, al mismo tiempo, contra realidades nacionales: contra sesudos polítics

<sup>27</sup> *Ensayos*, II, p. 178.



y ciudadanos que no admitían que nadie se saliera del carril, contra una tradición desvitalizada e incapaz, contra la quietud que oculta defectos inconfesables y podredumbre moral. Pero también contra el barbero, aquel "señor rapista" que cuenta el cuento de un loco, contra la pedantería del bachiller Sansón Carrasco, contra Antonia Quijana, la sobrina de Don Quijote, a la que la ramplonería había embotado no sólo la cabeza sino también el corazón, encarnación del sentido común que con su mezquindad gobierna una casa, gobierna España, y mata todo atisbo de heroísmo.<sup>28</sup> Y arremetía, por fin, contra sus propios lectores y amigos que le tomaban a él, a Unamuno, por loco. Refiriéndose a uno de ellos decía amargamente Unamuno, insistiendo en uno de sus grandes temas: "¡Válgame Dios, y cómo confunden las gentes la locura con la mentecatería, pues este mi pobre amigo, por creerme loco, me juzga tan ciego que no he de ver por tela de cedazo; me tiene por tan tonto, que no he de entenderle!"<sup>29</sup>

Pero si la tontería solemne y aparatosa indignaba a Unamuno, la tontería pedante y pretenciosa no pudo menos de exasperarle también. En su citado ensayo *Vulgaridad* dejó constancia de lo que era esa irritación suya: "Y hay una forma de vulgaridad que es la más terrible y la más dañina de todas: la vulgaridad brillante. El brillo no hace sino más vulgar a la vulgaridad. . . . La vulgaridad con brillo está peor." Con frecuencia aludió acremente Unamuno, por escrito y de palabra, a la dorada brillantez a que puede dar lugar la vulgarización moderna de la cultura, a la posibilidad de cualquiera de afectar una sabiduría de relumbrón con algo aprendido superficialmente y al azar, sin sentido ni reposo. Ya en el último ensayo de *En torno al casticismo* hablaba de un mal que se agrava y cunde:

Es cada día mayor la ignorancia, y la peor de todas, la que se ignora a sí misma, la de la semiciencia presumida. . . . La presunción es tanta, que impide se empiece por el principio, por aprender conocimientos elementales en cartillas científicas. El que quiere darse una tintura de ciencia comienza por el fin, se va a las maduras sin haber pasado por las duras. . . .<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Compárese lo que decía en el último ensayo de *En torno al casticismo*: "Es un espectáculo deprimente el del estado mental y moral de nuestra sociedad española, sobre todo si se la estudia en su centro. Es una pobre conciencia colectiva y rasa. Pesa sobre todos nosotros una atmósfera de bochorno; debajo de una dura costra de gravedad formal se extiende una ramplonería comprimida, una enorme trivialidad y vulgachería." (*Ensayos*, I, p. 112.)

<sup>29</sup> *Ensayos*, II, p. 131.

<sup>30</sup> *Ensayos*, I, p. 118.

Aunque Unamuno pidiera en este momento "trabajo modesto e investigación *directa*, lenta y sosegada," bien pronto iba a exacerbarse su irritación ante una erudición sin alma y una especialización dedicada a la banalidad. Por el abra segura y definitiva que fué para él, desde un principio, la ciudad y la Universidad de Salamanca vió desfilar, durante muchos años, Don Miguel a una serie de jóvenes profesionales de la cultura, presumidos catedráticos recién escudillados, a los que una beca y una corta estancia en una universidad germánica daba insoportables ínfulas y ambiciones de especialistas sabihondos. Sufrió con muchos de ellos, porque simbolizaban una juventud sin juventud, estropeada por la pedantería y por el arriivismo, y asoció siempre el disgusto que le producían a la erudición y a la técnica del rebusque histórico y literario. Esas preocupaciones y condenaciones suyas, expuestas en varios ensayos, escritos precisamente en los primeros años del siglo XX, acaban por plasmar un personaje de su novela *Niebla*: Antolín S. Paparrigópulos,<sup>31</sup> el héroe de un episodio secundario en el capítulo XXIII de la *niebla*, mucho más profundamente ridículo y tonto que el Avito Carrascal de su primera novela. Paparrigópulos cree, como muchos de sus contemporáneos, en la diferenciación del trabajo como un fin en sí mismo, tiene fe ciega en toda la menuda labor de investigación científica que nada tiene que ver con el valor humano de la cultura, y lo sacrifica todo a una reputación científica, aunque ésta se base en títulos pomposos de trabajos insignificantes que tal vez ni llegarán a publicarse.

Desconfió Unamuno toda su vida del progresismo y de la ciencia que habían llegado a convertirse en algunos en una verdadera religión. De todo ello habló largamente en un ensayo titulado *Cientifismo*, del libro *Mi religión y otros ensayos*, dedicado especialmente a Auguste Comte y su positivismo.<sup>32</sup> Coincide con el filósofo italiano Papini, en que "los mejores discípulos de Comte, se encuentran en las novelas de un gran francés, Gustavo Flaubert, y que son los señores Homais, Bouvard y Pécuchet." Y sigue diciendo Unamuno que "sin duda que estos dos inmortales compañeros, así como el estupendo farmacéutico de *Madame Bovary*, son tres de los más típicos representantes del cientifismo." Desde sus preocupaciones eternistas, Unamuno considera que "Monsieurs [*sic*] Homais, Bouvard, Pécuchet son divertidísimos." "No sospechan siquiera que pueda haber otro mundo fuera de aquel en que ellos viven y

<sup>31</sup> Véase J. López-Morillas, "Unamuno y sus criaturas: Antolín S. Paparrigópulos," *Cuadernos americanos*, 1948, VII, 234 y ss.

<sup>32</sup> *Ensayos*, II, p. 435 y ss.

mueren." Pero la diversión es sólo pasajera. Aun después de preguntarse si no serán útiles con sus candidas ilusiones, si no será su mal un mal que pueda tornarse en bien, se siente agitado ante ellos como quien prevé una crisis de la enfermedad crónica que sufre: "Os digo que huyo de ellos como de la peste y que hay pocas gentes que me irriten más y me hagan más perder la paciencia que la honorable cofradía de Messieurs Homais, Bouvard, Pécuchet . . . y compañía."

Gran conocedor y lector asiduo de Flaubert, podía Unamuno encontrar en sus novelas una tipología que él veía reproducirse en torno suyo, y en la *Correspondance* espigó sin duda constantemente muchas frases—más bien, exclamaciones, erupciones—que son como síntomas de las crisis de la especial dolencia del novelista francés: "Que les hommes sont bêtes. . . ."; "C'est assomant de bêtise . . . ."; "Pauvre humanité! Que de bêtises lui sont passées par le cerveau depuis qu'elle existe! . . . ."; etc.<sup>33</sup> Pero en el terreno de las coincidencias pasará tal vez desapercibido que también Flaubert desconfió, en el fondo de su fundamental pesimismo, y pese a ser él un intelectual puro, del valor de la inteligencia humana: E. L. Ferrère, en su libro sobre la estética de Flaubert, ha observado que "cet homme qui haïssait la bêtise humaine, se faisait, aussi peu que possible, illusion sur la valeur de l'intelligence, même très élevée et sur le bonheur qu'elle peut procurer."<sup>34</sup> Flaubert no podía ver la salvación en la ciencia, aunque hubiera creído firmemente en ella.<sup>35</sup> El mismo Unamuno reconocía que "los héroes de Flaubert son caricaturas conscientes, puesto que su padre espiritual era hombre de finísimo sentido y de una muy clara apreciación del valor de la ciencia y hombre de ciencia sólida él mismo."<sup>36</sup> El rencor contra el "cientifismo" y la sátira y ridiculización de sus exponentes encontraba en esto sus raíces. Pero no termina aquí la complejidad de la teoría flaubertiana del "mal de la pensée." En una carta a Louis Bouilhet, fechada en Damasco, el 4 de setiembre de 1850, durante su viaje a Oriente, se refiere precisamente a su reacción ante el *Essai de philosophie positive* de Auguste Comte que lee en Jerusalén, y

<sup>33</sup> *Correspondance* I (Paris 1926), p. 11; II, p. 238 y 371; etc.

<sup>34</sup> *L'esthétique de Gustave Flaubert*, p. 41. Refiriéndose a lo que son para él dos aspectos del mismo problema, dice: "Il nous resterait à parler de deux formes plus particulières qu'a prises dans l'esprit de Flaubert la philosophie pessimiste: la haine de la bêtise humaine—et la théorie du mal de la pensée."

<sup>35</sup> Para lo que la ciencia pudo ser para Flaubert, véase, por ejemplo, J. Seznec, "Science et religion chez Flaubert d'après les sources de la *Tentation de Saint-Antoine*," *RR*, 1942, XXXIII, 360 y ss.

<sup>36</sup> *Ensayos*, II, p. 439.

formula todo un diagnóstico del pensar de la época que tiene también mucho de unamunesco:

Pourquoi ne pas s'arranger de l'objectif qui nous est soumis? Il en vaut un autre. A prendre les choses impartialement, il y en a peu de plus fertiles. *L'inéptie consiste à vouloir conclure.* Nous nous disons: Mais notre base n'est pas fixe; qui aura raison des deux? . . . . Tout est brouillé. Mais c'est ne pas comprendre le crépuscule, c'est ne vouloir que midi ou minuit. . . . Oui, la bêtise consiste à vouloir conclure. . .<sup>37</sup>

Para Flaubert suponía en aquel momento una terrible estupidez aceptar cualquier solución utópica y definitiva, pero la frase última demuestra que tontería es el dogmatismo de quien acepta fanáticamente ideales sin discriminación ni matices, y comulga con ruedas de molino. A la necedad que es un partido político aludió también, como vimos, en años juveniles, Pachico Zabalbide. Don Miguel de Unamuno fué luego en su vida pública un buen ejemplo de no casarse con nadie, de no estar nunca con un vencedor que pudiera imponer fe ciega a sus secuaces, de defender ante sí mismo, y ante los demás, al enemigo en la oposición, en la "guerra civil," para acabar haciéndolo suyo o infundiéndole fraternalmente sus cuidados. Pero es, sobre todo, el "ne pas conclure" pieza maestra de su problemática y su dialéctica, y cualquiera que conozca, aunque sea superficialmente, su obra sabrá de ese apasionado y perpetuo dejar abiertas y sin solución las más tremendas cuestiones que se le plantean al hombre de carne y hueso. He ahí *Mi religión* en que se dice "que si quieren soluciones acudan a la tienda de enfrente, porque en la mía no se vende semejante artículo," en que Unamuno declara su aversión a que lo clasifiquen entre unos o entre otros, y en que se considera piedad religiosa "descubrir dondequiera el dolor, la necedad y la ineptia." He ahí *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida* con vacilaciones contradictorias y su horror a las definiciones. He ahí la "agonía" de *La agonía del cristianismo*. . . .

Pero todavía encontraron todos estos dolores y preocupaciones que tenfan su gran motivación en la "bêtise humaine" un ulterior desarrollo literario en la obra de Unamuno. *La novela de Don Sandalio, jugador de ajedrez*, que se publica, juntamente con otras en un volúmen, en 1933,<sup>38</sup> nos ofrece nuevos materiales para estudiar la "enfermedad de Flaubert." Tal vez no deje de tener algún significado el hecho de que Unamuno insista en el prólogo en que la

<sup>37</sup> *Correspondance*, II, p. 238 y s. La importancia y origen de "la bêtise consiste à vouloir conclure" han sido destacados por P. Binswanger, *op. cit.*, p. 137 y ss.

<sup>38</sup> En *San Manuel Bueno, mártir, y tres historias más*, Madrid, 1933, p. 119 y ss.



acción de la novela tiene lugar en el otoño e invierno de 1910: Quién sabe si esta historia de casino no tiene mucho de las mismas fuentes chismográficas que suministraron el ambiente y episodios secundarios de *Amor y pedagogía*, *Niebla* y los cuentos de la primera época.<sup>39</sup> El epílogo de *La novela de Don Sandalio*, sin embargo, está fechado en Salamanca, en diciembre de 1930, y no cabe duda que Don Miguel la escribió en los últimos tiempos de su destierro en Francia antes de la caída de la dictadura de Primo de Rivera. El "apacible rincón de la costa al pie de las montañas que se miran en la mar" es Hendaya, aunque Unamuno meta en su historia temas de una vida entera. La novela lleva como lema aquel pasaje de *Bouvard et Pécuchet* que conocemos de antiguo: "Alors une faculté pitoyable se développa dans leur esprit, celle de voir la bêtise et de ne plus la tolérer." Las primeras páginas, antes de encontrar a su Don Sandalio, nos colocan ante un hombre que viene "huyendo de la sociedad de los llamados prójimos o semejantes" a buscar la compañía de las olas y de la naturaleza, y que trata de explicar su estado de ánimo por lo que sabe de la obra de Flaubert:

Me ha traído, ya lo sabes, un nuevo ataque de misantropía, o mejor de antropofobia, pues a los hombres más que los odio los temo. Y es que se me ha exacerbado aquella lamentable facultad que, según Gustavo Flaubert, se desarrolló en los espíritus de su Bouvard y su Pécuchet, y es la de ver la tontería y no poder tolerarla. Aunque para mí no es verla, sino oírla; no ver la tontería—*bêtise*—, sino oír las tonterías que día tras día, e irremisiblemente, sueltan jóvenes y viejos, tontos y listos. Pues son los que pasan por listos los que más tonterías hacen y dicen. Aunque sé bien que me retrucarás con mis propias palabras, aquellas que tantas veces me has oído, de que el hombre más tonto es el que se muere sin haber hecho ni dicho tontería alguna. . . . ¡Qué bien me represento a Robinson! Huyo, no de ver huellas de pies desnudos de hombres, sino de oírles palabras de sus almas revestidas de necesidad, y me aislo para defenderme del roce de sus tonterías. . . .<sup>40</sup>

Repíete aquí Unamuno ideas conocidas acerca de la tontería inevitable en una vida regular y rutinaria y de la tontería de los prudentes y avisados que nunca se salen de los cauces de la sensatez. Pero por boca de ese amigo desconocido de un lector suyo, que le manda la correspondencia que sirve de base a la novela, nos revela otro aspecto de su aversión a la "bêtise." En sus paseos por el monte

<sup>39</sup> En el citado *Y va de cuento* . . . escribe: "Y cuando por acaso los hacía [cuentos], sacábalos, o de algo que, visto u oído, hablale herido la imaginación . . ." (*El espejo de la muerte*, p. 154).

<sup>40</sup> *San Manuel Bueno*, p. 123-125.



se amista con robles y con hiedras, y cree que así empieza a reconciliarse con la humanidad. Y decide acercarse de nuevo a los hombres: "Además, ¿por qué no he de decírtelo? ¡Hace tanto tiempo que no he oído una tontería! Y así, a la larga no se puede vivir. . . ."

¡Oh, atracción de la tontería! Testimonios abundantes dejó Flaubert de cuán profundamente la había sentido. Su amigo Maurice Du Camp nos cuenta de primera mano, refiriéndose al *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, que quería agrupar "des prudhomismes dont il riait et s'irritait à la fois."<sup>41</sup> E. Faguet, uno de los primeros críticos sistemáticos de su obra, resume que la manía esencial de Flaubert era "l'horreur de la bêtise et en même temps une sorte de fascination que la bêtise exerçait sur lui," de sus "charmes atroces," y que "*Bouvard et Pécuchet* est né de cette passion contre et pour la bêtise humaine."<sup>42</sup> No poder sufrir la tontería y no poder vivir sin ella: eso le pasó a Flaubert y al narrador de *La novela de Don Sandalio*. Y éste muere al palo en cuanto llegan las primeras lluvias, y se hace socio del Casino, en un principio "más para ver que para oír." Los periódicos son más estúpidos que los hombres que los escriben y que los leen. "Las astillas de las conversaciones" le hieren, y termina por declarar una vez más: "No, no puedo tolerar la tontería humana." Pero cuando va observando y conociendo a los otros socios, jugadores de *mus* y de ajedrez, cuando ya Don Sandalio empieza a mostrarnos la fachada que esconde el hueco de su personalidad, cuando el narrador quiere escapar al atractivo del casino, se arranca Unamuno una de sus más entrañadas confesiones:

Y pensaba que por mucho que quiera huir de los hombres, de sus tonterías, de su estúpida civilización, sigo siendo hombre, mucho más hombre de lo que me figuro, y que no puedo vivir lejos de ellos. ¡Si es su misma necedad lo que me atrae! ¡Si la necesito para irritarme por dentro de mí!<sup>43</sup>

Muchas veces se preguntaron los amigos y admiradores de Unamuno cómo podía Don Miguel asistir con tanta asiduidad al Casino de Salamanca y a las tertulias provincianas de los cafés cobijados en los pórticos de la Plaza Mayor. En su citado ensayo *Vulgaridad* había clamado él desgarradamente: "Pero, Dios mío, ¡tener que convivir con lo que no ha de sobrevivir!" Hay que suponer que Don Miguel tomó las tonterías de sus convecinos y

<sup>41</sup> *Souvenirs littéraires*, I, p. 169.

<sup>42</sup> *Gustave Flaubert*, p. 127 y 129.

<sup>43</sup> *San Manuel Bueno*, p. 137.

contertulios como excitante y reactivo. Unas frases de *La novela de Don Sandalio* nos indican sus vacilaciones de todos los días entre ir o no ir al Casino, y, al mismo tiempo, lo saludable de sus finales efectos: "El que no se vuelve loco entre tantos tontos es más tonto que ellos." Pero el mismo "epistolero," el que tanta pasión pone en hacerle la partida a Don Sandalio, nos revela también la trascendencia que Unamuno había llegado a dar en sus últimos años a la tontería de la humanidad. Una vez se pregunta: "¿Y no es acaso la tontería la más grande de las tragedias del hombre?" Y otra, exclama: "¡Es insondable la tontería humana!" Seguramente *Bouvard et Pécuchet* contribuyó ahora a hacerle ver de otra manera la estupidez de los hombres. O tal vez, mejor, una nueva interpretación de lo que los dos geniales y estúpidos personajes de Gustave Flaubert son y significan. Típicamente unamunescos es que Bouvard y Pécuchet aparezcan aquí revueltos con Don Quijote, otro solitario como ellos, del que de nuevo se recuerda que "un grave eclesiástico, henchido de toda la tontería de los hombres cuerdos, le llamó Don Tonto, le diputó mentecato y le echó en cara sandeces y vaciedades."

La elección de una frase de *Bouvard et Pécuchet* como lema y motivo de *La novela de Don Sandalio* no puede parecer indiferente. Ha sido *Bouvard et Pécuchet* la obra de Flaubert más difícil de definir, pero el tesón de los eruditos nos ha dado a conocer las circunstancias de su origen y de su elaboración y hasta ha desentrañado en lo posible lo que quiso ser este libro que el autor dejó inconcluso e inédito. Hoy sabemos cuánto esfuerzo y cuánto sufrimiento le costó a Gustave Flaubert escribirlo en un largo período, que va de 1870 a 1880, años de dificultades y privaciones para un artista como él.<sup>44</sup> En su correspondencia hay numerosos textos acerca de cómo empezó a escribir la historia de aquellos dos tipos raros con deseos de dar salida a una furia concentrada que le sofocaba y de cómo pasó por gravísimas crisis en su exacerbada enfermedad durante la gestación de la novela: "La bêtise humaine, actuellement, m'écrase si fort—escribía una vez—que je me fais l'effet d'une mouche ayant sur le dos l'Himalaya. N'importe! Je tâcherai de vomir mon venin dans mon livre. Cet espoir me soulage!" Pero lo que ahora nos importa más en él no es conocer todo lo que trabajó Flaubert para documentar y demostrar la estupidez de los hombres y la ineficacia y fallos de la ciencia, ni siquiera la filosofía flauber-

<sup>44</sup> Véase el capítulo IX sobre los últimos años de Flaubert, en R. Descharmes y R. Dumesnil, *Autour de Flaubert*, II (Paris, 1912), p. 74 y ss. y los dos primeros capítulos de R. Descharmes, *Autour de Bouvard et Pécuchet*, Paris, 1921, p. 11 y ss.

tiana que se oculta bajo las inquietudes y la agitación sin sentido de los dos "bonshombres."<sup>45</sup> Lo que reviste importancia para nosotros es que de todo el libro de *Bouvard et Pécuchet* el pasaje más destacado por los críticos es el que también destacó Don Miguel de Unamuno, unas frases que se encuentran hacia el final del capítulo VIII, después de Dios sabe cuántos desengaños de sistemas filosóficos y morales:

Alors une faculté pitoyable se développa dans leur esprit, celle de voir la bêtise et de ne plus la tolérer. Des choses insignifiantes les attristaient: les réclames des journaux, le profil d'un bourgeois, une sottise réfléchie entendue par hasard. . . . Ils sentaient peser sur eux comme la lourdeur de toute la Terre. . . .

"Phrase capitale, qui laisse voir le fond de sa pensée," la ha calificado René Descharmes, uno de los grandes especialistas de Flaubert.<sup>46</sup> Otro de estos especialistas, René Dumesnil, publicó en el *Mercur de France*, en 1914, un ensayo con el que se inicia una nueva interpretación de lo que simbolizan los héroes de la última novela flaubertiana: "Bouvard et Pécuchet sont-ils des imbéciles?"<sup>47</sup> En este estudio escribía Dumesnil:

Peut-être me trompé-je, mais je crois deviner que Flaubert, à vivre dix ans en leur compagnie, à partager leurs travaux et leurs peines—et quel ne fut pas son labeur!—s'est à la longue départi quelque peu de son impassibilité coutumière. Entre tous leurs enfants, les parents chérissent plus tendrement ceux qui leur ont coûté de gros soucis. Volontairement ou non, Flaubert a fait de ses deux "bonshombres" les personnages sympathiques de son livre; et de tous les gens de Chavignolles, en vérité, Bouvard et Pécuchet sont non seulement les moins bêtes, mais encore ils sont les plus humains.

Y dos frases, que también Dumesnil considera capitales, nos llevan hacia la adquisición por parte de Bouvard y Pécuchet de su nueva sensibilidad: "Par leur curiosité, leur intelligence se développa" y: "Ayant plus d'idées, ils eurent plus de souffrances."<sup>48</sup> Flaubert está aquí como estuvo en sus otros personajes, pero ya no adopta

<sup>45</sup> Véanse las conclusiones de R. Descharmes, *op. cit.*, p. 270 y s.; véase también la reseña del libro por A. Beaumier, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1922, XCII Année, t. VIII, 701 y s. El inventor del "bovarysme," J. de Gaultier, *Le génie de Flaubert*, Paris, 1913, p. 282 y ss., acaba por encontrar en la estupidez de Bouvard y Pécuchet la mejor expresión de la filosofía de Flaubert: "Sois en harmonie avec toi-même."

<sup>46</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 263.

<sup>47</sup> Reproducido con adiciones en R. Dumesnil, *En marge de Flaubert*, Paris, 1928, p. 31 y ss.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44 y 48.

aires de artista analítico e impasible, sino que sufre con ellos. "Voir la bêtise et ne plus la tolérer" es un grito de Flaubert que constituye para la crítica la clave de la novela y de todo el pensamiento flaubertiano. En una carta muy invocada dice: "Bouvard et Pécuchet m'emplissent à un tel point que je suis devenu eux. Leur bêtise est mienne et j'en crève." Y es que, como los dos antiguos escribientes, sentía también pesar sobre él la tontería de la humanidad, "la lourdeur de toute la Terre," y, evolucionando como ellos, se compadecía de sus protagonistas, de los hombres y de sí mismo.<sup>49</sup>

No creyó nunca Unamuno en la tan decantada impasibilidad del artista y mucho menos en la de Flaubert. En su temprano ensayo *Leyendo a Flaubert* había ya escrito:

Sólo en obras de autores mediocres no se nota la personalidad de ellos, pero es porque no la tienen. El que la tiene la pone dondequiera que ponga la mano, y acaso más cuanto más quiera velarse. A Flaubert se le ve en sus obras, y no sólo en el Federico Moreau de *La Educación Sentimental*, sino hasta en la misma Emma Bovary, y en San Antonio y en Pécuchet mismo. Sí, en Pécuchet. El, Flaubert mismo, decía que el autor debe estar en sus obras, como Dios en el Universo: presente en todas partes, pero en ninguna de ellas visible. Hay, sin embargo, quienes aseguran ver a Dios en sus obras. Y yo aseguro ver a Flaubert, al Flaubert de la correspondencia íntima, en muchos personajes de sus obras. . . .

Una posible relectura de la obra de Flaubert, en aquel cuchitril de una "pension de famille," no lejos de la Estrella, en el año de 1925, durante su vida de exilado en París, puede hacerle ver más claro el sentido de *Bouvard et Pécuchet*:

Mentira la supuesta impersonalidad u objetividad de Flaubert. Todos los personajes poéticos de Flaubert son Flaubert y más que ningún otro Emma Bovary. Hasta Mr. Homais es para burlarse de sí mismo, por compasión, es decir por amor de sí mismo. Pobre Bouvard! Pobre Pécuchet!<sup>50</sup>

A través de ese que llamó "libro doloroso," y que tanto le recordaba a Don Quijote y Sancho, fué Unamuno aprendiendo la piedad última que Flaubert sintió por la tontería humana, piélagos en el que todos estamos sumergidos. ¿No sería, pues, ahora el momento de recapitular sobre toda una vida sufriendo de la inevi-

<sup>49</sup> Atención especial a estas cuestiones y a los problemas concernientes a la significación de *Bouvard et Pécuchet* han prestado no sólo libros sobre Flaubert ya clásicos (R. Dumesnil, A. Thibaudet), sino la bibliografía flaubertiana más reciente: Véase, por ejemplo, A. Colling, *Gustave Flaubert*, Paris, 1941, p. 335 y ss.; C. Digeon, *Le dernier visage de Flaubert*, Paris, 1946, p. 94 y ss.; etc.

<sup>50</sup> *Cómo se hace una novela*, Buenos Aires, 1927, p. 66.



table plaga de los tontos y de sus tonterías? Un artículo periodístico de 1933, titulado precisamente *La enfermedad de Flaubert*,<sup>51</sup> parece ser un alto en el camino en el que se recuerda y comprueba una vieja dolencia que pesa y coarta:

Sí, tiene usted razón, amigo mío, tiene usted mucha razón; es una terrible enfermedad. Y de la que no sabe uno cómo defenderse. La padeció aquel intelectual—modelo de intelectuales—que fué Gustavo Flaubert, el gran solitario, el inmortal creador del no menos inmortal Mr. Homais. Y en un pasaje de su inacabada obra "Bouvard y Pécuchet," aludió Flaubert a esa terrible enfermedad cuando escribió que esos dos monigotes—¡y tan suyos!—encontraron la lamentable—"pitoyable"—facultad de descubrir la mentecatez humana y no poder tolerarla. De todos los dolores del entendimiento, pues éste suele dolernos—¡y qué dolores los suyos!—éste es el más insoportable. Más que el de la duda, más que el de no lograr la comprensión de algo. ¿Aunque no será en el fondo, que el que sufre de esa enfermedad flaubertiana es porque no comprende la mentecatez, su verdadera razón de ser? ¿No es acaso falta de caridad, de amor al prójimo, de humanidad en fin? ¿No es inhumano que le duela a uno más una mentecatada, una simpleza que se le diga, que no una palabra que se le juega?

Hay mucho aquí del enfermo crónico que padece una enfermedad y está encariñado con ella, que trata de explicársela y piensa en vano en defectos constitucionales, en hábitos adquiridos, en torpezas juveniles, y quién sabe en cuántas cosas más, y que, al mismo tiempo, no se concibe ya sin la dolencia, que es, pese a sus incomodidades, parte de su existir. Y vuelve aquí Unamuno, en este artículo, a las andadas citando y temblando ante aquel terrible texto evangélico en que se amenaza con el infierno al que llamare a su hermano mentecato, memo, bobo. . . . Y se pregunta febrilmente, con Quevedo, si no será la envidia la raíz y la causa de esta enfermedad del entendimiento, el amor propio, el anhelar la paz de ser tan mentecato como todos los mentecatos que pululan por el mundo. Y también se pregunta, desesperanzado, si no podrá curarse, si:

no puede uno—u otro—exclamar alguna vez en su vida: "Miserable hombre de mí, ¿quién me librará de este entendimiento de muerte?" Sí, de no entender más que de mentecatez, ramplonería, vulgaridad, frivolidad, muerte en fin.

Se enternece, por último, Unamuno pensando en Flaubert y en la "bêtise du soleil" de que habló el San Antonio de las tentaciones flaubertianas: "¡Pobre Flaubert! ¡Pobre Sol!" Se ablanda, se compadece, pero la realidad cotidiana de los mentecatos Homais,

<sup>51</sup> Recogido en *La ciudad de Henoc*, México, 1941, p. 25 y ss.



Bouvard y Pécuchet es demasiado fuerte. Hubiera querido Unamuno cambiarse para no sufrir a los que creen a pies juntillas en la trivialidad científica, para no sufrir la gravedad imposible de la cordura momificada, la chabacanería y lugares comunes de la conversación diaria, la estupidez de las ideologías y encasillados políticos, la falta de objeto de la actividad y de la ambición humana, la superficialidad atropellada sin asomo de angustia ni intimidación, toda la vaciedad y el automatismo que lleva implícito el comercio entre hombres. Si la "enfermedad de Flaubert" arrastró piedad y conmiseración por la humanidad, y hasta por él mismo, era porque, en la última etapa de su vida, quizás la agonía unamunesca caminaba hacia la desesperación más absoluta. Nos hemos sorprendido ante una aspiración, inimaginable en él, Miguel de Unamuno, de querer ser, siquiera por una vez, lo que no se es: ansias de verse libre del dolor del entendimiento, limpio, al fin, de la "enfermedad de Flaubert."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> No quiere decir esto que viejas ideas no alternen con nuevas actitudes en los artículos de la última época; véanse los reproducidos por F. Madrid, *op. cit.*, p. 228 y 232-233; "No es lo peor mirarse hacia dentro y sentirse imbécil . . ." (*Sentido histórico*, 15/V/1936); "La tontería es más dañosa que la ladronería . . . La osadía vanidosa o vanidad osada, la fatuidad, es más estragadora que la concupiscencia . . ." (*De la tontería otra vez*, 8/XI/1935). Y sin embargo, Unamuno, como Flaubert, habla acabado, en su vida y en su obra, por aceptar la tontería. Compárese W. Marti, "Gradation de Flaubert," *Trivium*, 1946, IV, 251: "Malgré la bêtise, la manque de sens absolu, l'absurdité et le néant du monde, des choses, Flaubert ne s'est pas suicidé. Il en a eu la tentation violente, mais il n'a pas passé à l'acte. C'est donc qu'il a trouvé, malgré tout, la force, le moyen de vivre. Dans le néant et malgré le néant il s'est trouvé un motif de durée." Pero aquellos que sintieron que Unamuno les consideraba tontos no debieron perdonarle nunca, especialmente cuando la política anduvo por en medio. Su odio a la cerrazón y a la tontería pudo, como en Flaubert (véase E. Haas, *Flaubert und die Politik*, Biella, 1933), influir mucho en sus actitudes y en sus reacciones. Véanse ejemplos del rencor implacable de los escritores marxistas contra el individualismo y el antidogmatismo político de Unamuno en A. Bazán, *Unamuno y el marxismo, con un ensayo de I. Ehremburg*, Madrid, 1935; y J. Marinello, *Momento español*, La Habana, 1939, p. 79 y ss.

## VARIA

### TWO NOTES ON GUILLÉN DE CASTRO

#### I

#### THE DATE OF *Engañarse Engañando*

IN Bruerton's opinion, this play was written in 1620-24 (probably 1622-24).<sup>1</sup> E. Juliá Martínez believes that it was written "hacia 1621."<sup>2</sup> The following reference in the play to a *cuello escarolado* suggests that it was written no later than March 1, 1623, for on that date a royal decree permanently banned these collars as an article of male attire:<sup>3</sup>

GONZ. ¿Y de lo azul en los cuellos?

PRIN. Que es bueno, como no sea mucho.

CONDE. ¡Qué buen gusto tienes, pues parece que presenta la cara en un plato azul, el que tan azul le lleva a una imagen de milagros!<sup>4</sup>

A much closer approximation of the date of composition of *Engañarse engañando* is given by another topical reference:

GONZ. Bien pagas a quien le cuesta componer esos bigotes dos horas de bigotera cada mañana.

PRIN. Di, ¿qué es bigotera?

GONZ. Es obra nueva en España: es como un freno con que a los braquillos quiebran el hocico.<sup>5</sup>

Taking at its face value Castro's statement that "bigotera" is "obra nueva en España," *Engañarse engañando* must have been written very soon after the word "bigotera" came into usage. The expression is not found in Covarrubias' dictionary, nor does Cejador y Frauca list it in his

<sup>1</sup> "The Chronology of the *Comedias* of Guillén de Castro," *Hispanic Review*, 1944, XII, 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Obras de Guillén de Castro*, Madrid, 1926-27, III, xviii, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ruth Lee Kennedy, "Certain Phases of the Sumptuary Decrees of 1623 and Their Relation to Tirso's Theatre," *Hispanic Review*, 1942, X, 94; 113.

<sup>4</sup> *Obras*, III, 172a.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 171b.

*La lengua de Cervantes.* Thus it does not seem likely that the word was current long before 1615.

*Bigoterías* are mentioned in Lope's *El amor secreto hasta celos* (Acad. N., III, 419b) to which the date of 1612-15 (probably 1614) has been ascribed.<sup>6</sup> Castro mentions the device, but without naming it, in *El Narciso en su opinión* (*Obras*, III, 78a), dated by Bruerton as 1612?-15?<sup>7</sup>

The first mention of *bigotera* to which the writer can ascribe a definite date is in a letter by Góngora, October 29, 1619, in which he states, "Aquí se ha dicho que Marvella ha sido visitada de cosarios: para socorrerla y remediarlo todo, se han quitado vigoterías, petos y pantorrillas postizas, y sobre todo el agul de los cuellos; porque color de celos no parece bien en la corte."<sup>8</sup>

The action referred to above, a presage of the sumptuary decrees of Philip IV, indicates that by October, 1619, *bigoterías* had received more than a modicum of acceptance among current fads.

In view of the likelihood that *bigotera* was current in Spanish as early as 1616, and the certainty that the expression was in vogue by 1619 or earlier, it does not seem credible that Castro would refer to the device as "obra nueva en España" if he had written *Engañarse engañando* after 1620. On this evidence the writer ascribes to this play the date 1616-19 (probably 1616). Reference to Bruerton's classification of the meters used in this play shows that this date falls within all the limits suggested by him with the exception of the one passage of *silva 2*.<sup>9</sup>

## II

### THE AUTHORSHIP OF *La manzana de la discordia y robo de Elena*

This play was written by Guillén de Castro and Mira de Amescua in collaboration, but no information is given regarding the part that each collaborator had in the composition of the play. The following comments have been made regarding this point:

"A pesar de resultar difícil apreciar lo que escribieron uno y otro de los dos colaboradores, nos inclinamos a creer que la primera jornada, quizá en su totalidad, sea de Mira de Amescua, y la tercera, de Guillén de Castro."<sup>10</sup>

"Le manuscrit qui nous l'a conservée n'indique pas que chacun des collaborateurs se soit réservé un acte plutôt que l'autre, et à la lecture, si dans le second acte la manière habituelle de Castro se laisse reconnaître à certains traits, ni cette empreinte n'est assez marquée, ni la différence d'un acte à l'autre n'est assez sensible pour lever à trois siècles de distance, le secret de la collaboration."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Morley and Bruerton, *The Chronology of Lope de Vega's Comedias*, New York, 1940, p. 168.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>8</sup> M. Artigas, *Don Luis de Góngora y Argote*, Madrid, 1925, p. 308.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, 122.

<sup>10</sup> *Obras*, III, xxvii.

<sup>11</sup> H. Mérimée, *L'art dramatique à Valencia*, Toulouse, 1913, p. 574.

"It is not possible, from the verse alone, to decide whether Castro had a hand in the play or not. However, all three of the acts contain characteristics not found in his authentic plays."<sup>12</sup>

But a careful and detailed study of the two writers concerned does disclose two minor but revealing differences between them. Castro shows a decided preference for the assimilation of the *-r* of the infinitive to an enclitic pronoun of the third person (*decillo* instead of *decirlo*, for example). The ratio of *-ll* to *-rl* in the twenty-seven plays which Bruerton considers to be definitely by Castro is 7.55 to 1. In all but three acts of these plays *-ll* appears with greater frequency than *-rl*.<sup>13</sup> This same preference is found in Castro's other writings. In his *Discursos* (*Obras*, III, 573-589), there are 81 examples of *-ll* to 3 of *-rl*. In his *Entremés de Cornelio* (*Obras*, III, 535-540), the figures are 7 *-ll* to 3 of *-rl*. For his *Poesías* (*Obras*, III, 541-572) the figures are *-ll* 64, *-rl* 11.

Castro also shows a tendency to use the conditional (*-ría*) rather frequently.<sup>14</sup>

The frequencies of *-rl*, *-ll* and *-ría* in the eight plays and one *auto* by Mira de Amescua which are readily accessible are as follows:

	<i>-rl</i>	<i>-ll</i>	<i>-ría</i>
<i>El arpa de David</i>	10	6	5
<i>Obligar contra su sangre</i>	67	2	1
<i>No hay dicha ni desdicha hasta la muerte</i>	29	9	4
<i>Galán, valiente y discreto</i>	28	9	8
<i>La rueda de la Fortuna</i>	41	15	2
<i>El ejemplo mayor de la desdicha y capitán Belisario</i>	34	10	3
<i>La Fénix de Salamanca</i>	43	22	16
<i>El esclavo del demonio</i>	39	3	5
<i>Pedro Telonario</i>	8	—	—

In contrast to the ratio in Castro's plays of 7.55 to 1 in favor of *-ll*, Mira de Amescua shows a preference of 3.93 to 1 for *-rl*; *-rl* is greater than *-ll* in every act of Mira de Amescua's plays which are listed above.

As can be seen in the tabulation, Mira de Amescua is rather sparing in the use of the conditional. In eight of these plays this tense is used only when it is needed for rhyme, or to express probability. The one exception is *La Fénix de Salamanca*, where there are four instances of *-ría* for which the imperfect subjunctive in *-ra* could have been substituted.

In view of these contrasting details of style found in the two dramatists, we should expect that any act of *La manzana de la discordia y robo*

<sup>12</sup> Bruerton, *op. cit.*, 142.

<sup>13</sup> W. E. Wilson, "A Note on Fifteen Plays attributed to Guillén de Castro," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 1947, VIII, 395.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

*de Elena* written in its entirety by Guillén de Castro would show a very heavy preponderance of *-ll* over *-rl*, and several instances of the conditional. Any act composed solely by Mira de Amescua would show *-rl* greater than *-ll* and the conditional would be used only when needed for rhyme.

The frequency of these items in the play is as follows:

	<i>-ll</i>	<i>-rl</i>	<i>-ria</i>
Act I	6	3	1 (needed for rhyme)
Act II	23	2	6 (4 needed for rhyme)
Act III	7	3	—

It will be noted that in Acts I and III there is a very low frequency of *-ll*, but that *-ll* appears more often than *-rl*. This suggests that Mira de Amescua was the author of the greater part of these acts, Castro's collaboration being indicated by the slightly higher frequency of his favorite *-ll*. Mira's authorship of the greater part of these acts is also attested by the sparing use of the conditional. The only part of Act I which conforms to Castro's style is the passage in *redondillas* (III, 361b-366a), where there are five examples of *-ll* to two of *-rl*. No definite statement can be made regarding Castro's part in Act III.

The only objection to ascribing all of Act II to Castro is Bruerton's statement that all three acts contain characteristics of versification not found in his authentic plays. The verse forms found in this act are *Lira* abbaC and abbaCC; *redondillas*; *décimas*; *silva 2*; *romance e-e*; *quintilla 1* and *5*, and one stanza of an irregular type ABBBA, and *romance e-a*. The only type which casts doubt on Castro's being the author of the entire act is the combination of *quintilla 1* and *5*, and the irregular stanza. (*Obras*, III, 376b-379b.) This combination was rarely used by Castro, the 90 lines of *quintilla 5* found in this passage being greater than that found in any complete authentic play.<sup>15</sup> This fact is strong evidence that Mira de Amescua was the author of this passage, the rest of the act being Castro's.

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#### A GALDOSIAN PARALLEL FOR PART OF GUZMÁN'S *EL ÁGUILA Y LA SERPIENTE*

AMONG the numerous so-called novels of the Mexican revolution Martín Luis Guzmán's *El águila y la serpiente* is regarded by many as the finest example of artistic writing. The work purports to be the personal memoirs of its author during certain years of Mexico's civil strife. It is, rather, a *mélange* of varied material—memoirs, pseudo-historical accounts of revolutionary incidents, and anecdotes about Pancho Villa and his

<sup>15</sup> Bruerton, *op. cit.*, 99-100.



associates. To this last category belongs one of the best known chapters of the book, "Un préstamo forzoso," which, with its sequel chapter, "El nudo de ahorcar," is a tale that bears the earmarks of pure fiction and whose content is admirably suited to depicting a certain type of revolutionary leader who rose from bandit to general and whom fact and legend invested with a cruel and ruthless cunning.

The skeleton of the story is as follows: The army coffers of an anonymous revolutionary general of Mexico are empty. To replenish them he has a plan which he proceeds to put into effect by ordering the immediate arrest of the five *wealthiest citizens* of the town he has just captured. These are brought before the general and informed that they must deliver thirty-five thousand pesos under penalty of execution at fixed hours on the following day. All protest their inability to gather such a sum and in this they are supported by the other inhabitants of the town. Now one of the five, Carlos Valdés, is a poverty-stricken individual who cannot get together five pesos. But the general is inexorable and assesses him for the sum of five thousand. On the following morning all the victims are brought together and Carlos Valdés is asked to hand over the five thousand pesos assigned as his share of the total. On answering that he cannot pay, he is hanged without further ado. The other four, aided by the town's citizens, promptly secure and deliver the *thirty thousand* remaining pesos for which they had been assessed.

This same story, with only slight variations in structural detail, occurs in one of Galdós' *Episodios nacionales* (second series), *Un voluntario realista*, where it is told only in brief and simply as one incident in the impulsive career of a violent young guerrilla during the Apostolic uprisings in northern Spain late in the 1820's.

Tilfn, a would-be chieftain, is sent out at the head of a small band to gather men, horses, and money. He, like the anonymous Mexican general, has a plan.

"El primer pueblo donde puso en práctica su plan fué en Salvador de Torruella. Hizo que se le presentaran el alcalde y los dos o tres *vecinos más acomodados* del pueblo; pidióles . . . una suma que concienzudamente fijó en *treinta mil* reales. Alborotáronse los prohombres . . . jurando y perjurando que ni aun vendiéndose al moro todos los vecinos juntarían los treinta mil. . . ."

Hallábanse durante estas conferencias en un mesón que hay a la entrada del pueblo. Tilfn, económico de palabras como todo el que es pródigo de acciones, mandó al alcalde que bajase al patio.—¡Perdón!—gritó el pobre hombre cayendo de rodillas.

Tilfn dió una orden terrible como quien da un consejo, y el alcalde fué fusilado. Igual suerte habrían sufrido los otros caciques si al punto no acudieran los vecinos con todo el dinero que tenían. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

It is unnecessary to point out that what occupies little more than a page in Galdós is given full artistic treatment by Guzmán, with due

<sup>1</sup> Benito Pérez Galdós, *Un voluntario realista*, Madrid, 1923, pp. 60-61. Italics are mine and call attention to a few exact similarities of detail.

attention to the circumstances of the civil war, to locale and to character development, as well as to the proper unfolding of the story.

Certainly it is not possible to say definitely that the Mexican author's tale was suggested by the incident from Galdós' novel, but there is good reason to believe that Guzmán must have known the Spanish work. In the first place, he was a man of broad education and of wide acquaintance with the letters of Spain, where he had lived for some time and worked as a journalist. It seems hardly likely that he could have missed reading at least the first two series of the *Episodios nacionales*, perhaps the most universally read in the Hispanic world of all Galdós' novels. A circumstance that could have forced his attention to these stories was his early interest in Javier Mina, one-time Spanish guerrilla and later a fighter for Mexican independence, whose biography, *Mina el Mozo, héroe de Navarra*, Guzmán was to publish in 1932. For one interested in the activities of the Spanish guerrillas and the regions in which they operated no better source could be found than those *episodios* of Galdós which deal with their operations.<sup>2</sup> Finally, it can be recalled that Guzmán wrote *El águila y la serpiente* during a stay in Spain and might well have had this incident from *Un voluntario realista* fresh in mind, and thus could easily have been inspired by it to create a fictional chapter set in the framework of the Mexican civil war, taking as his central figure a real or imaginary revolutionary chieftain from among the many whose life and activities were not unlike those of the violent outlaws who swarmed over the mountains of Navarre during the Apostolic rebellion.

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<sup>2</sup> Galdós did not, however, make Javier Mina an important figure in any of his *Episodios nacionales*.

## REVIEWS

*La trayectoria poética de Garcilaso.* By Rafael Lapesa. Revista de Occidente, Madrid, 1948: 241 pages.

The purpose of this study is "destacar la línea seguida por el arte de Garcilaso y el enlace de las principales influencias que recibió" (p. 173). The author shows that, in this development, "entre el punto de partida y la meta alcanzada podrá advertirse una continuidad de actitud vital que representa quizá lo más enraizado y peculiar de la producción de Garcilaso: lo que infundió acento español a su maravillosa incorporación de temas italianizantes y grecolatinos" (p. 2). Sr. Lapesa's first task was to establish a chronology of Garcilaso's poems (pp. 3-4 and Apéndice I), divided into three parts: poems of known date, of probable date, and of uncertain date. A new element introduced for determining probable dates is the progressive elimination of medieval and *cancionero* characteristics and the progressive assimilation of the influence of Garcilaso's great masters: Petrarch, Virgil, Sannazaro, and, "en segundo término," Horace, Ovid, Ariosto, Tansillo, B. Tasso. In the enrichment of Garcilaso's poetic world, poets other than these were "circunstancias más o menos actuantes, pero circunstancias al fin." They revealed to him progressively "lo que llevaba dentro de sí y no había puesto en juego" (p. 182).

Sr. Lapesa is well aware that European amatory poetry during five centuries "gira en torno a la misma concepción del amor—el amor cortés—" and that in the XVIth century "no faltan . . . vestigios de *cancionero* tradicional disfrazados bajo las formas líricas" (p. 7). The *cancionero* poetry of the XVth century was "conceptual y . . . pareo en halagos sensoriales" (p. 13). Withdrawn from the outer world, this poetry "se recluye en la seca y vigorosa expresión de sentimientos" (p. 23). It shows an evident fondness for personifications and allegories, for *conceptismo*, and is distinguished by a certain *recato*, a vagueness in referring to the beauty of the beloved, as well as by a scant interest in external nature. In so far as Garcilaso shows in his poems a carrying over of these negative characteristics, it is evident that he is under the influence of his own native Spanish tradition.

As against the treatment of love by the Castilian poets of the XVth century, there stands that of Ausias March in his *Cants d'amor*. The "inigualables páginas" of Menéndez y Pelayo on the great Valencian (p. 32) should, I believe, have been supplemented by those of other writers on courtly love in its non-Hispanic development: C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford, 1938), and A. J. Denomy, *The Heresy of Courtly Love* (New York, 1947). The interplay of the *paradoxes amou-*

*reuz* would thus have seemed more natural and logical, less affected by "profundas corrientes del sentir hispánico" (p. 32). But it is a fact that in Ausias March the conflicts produced by these paradoxes are extremely violent, that the allegorizing tendency is stronger than in the Castilian *cancionero* poets, and that the emphasis is strongly on the "cualidades morales" rather than on the physical presence of the beloved. The influence of Ausias March—derived from, yet differing greatly from, that of Petrarch—is clearly traceable in Garcilaso's poems and follows a course parallel to that of the *cancionero* poets.

Several pages (34-42) are devoted to a survey of the connecting links between the poetry of the *cancioneros* and of March and the italianate poetry of Boscán: ". . . la nueva poesía exigía un ennoblecimiento que Boscán no realizó. . . . Esta persistencia de costumbres propias de las viejas escuelas es unas veces causa y otras efecto de la imperfecta acomodación de Boscán al tipo de arte que inauguraba."

The next 20 pages examine Garcilaso's debt to the Castilian *cancioneros*, to Ausias March, and, in general, to "lo hispánico." It is evident that "la raigambre nacional de la poesía garcilasiana era muy profunda," especially in the poems attributable to the years prior to the stay in Naples. These are characterized by conflicts between reason and desire, by concern over the power of Fate, and by "reiteración conceptista" (pp. 43-45). The *toledano's* debt to Ausias March is convincingly set forth. As in the case of Boscán, the new does not drive out the old. Even after Garcilaso has found his "fórmula definitiva," recollections of "lo hispánico" persist in an art which has become "armonía y manso fluir de cristalinas ondas." Noteworthy among the persisting characteristics are "la contención recatada" and "la altiva independencia" whereby Garcilaso transforms "en viril resolución el abrazo con el destino adverso" (p. 62).

The second chapter, "La Asimilación del Arte Nuevo," rightly insists on the decisive influence of Petrarch. Great as was Garcilaso's debt to Virgil and Sannazaro, to Tansillo and B. Tasso, the most intimate part of his poetry "tomó cuerpo en los moldes trazados por el lírico de Arezzo." It was to Petrarch that he owed the revelation of new poetic horizons. The influence makes itself felt in Garcilaso's progression from "el conjunto de imágenes sombrías, adjetivos desesperados y conceptos de poesía abstracta" of the *cancioneros* (p. 73) to the "suaves notas de luz y color" which make possible his new treatment of the physical beauty of his beloved (p. 70). There is direct utilization of Dante (p. 72; nn. 93, 136), and there are reminiscences of poems by Boscán. With the Neapolitan period (1532-1536) the influences of Sannazaro, Ariosto, and the Classics produce a new interest in, and a new cultivation of, the pleasures of the senses, particularly observable in the use of adjectives (p. 89); mythology becomes an "elemento artístico de primordial importancia" (p. 93).

Very original is Sr. Lapesa's treatment of *Egloga II*. The key to the understanding of this poem is the study of its balanced structure. A new and convincing identification of Albanio is offered: Don Bernardino de Toledo, younger brother of the Duque de Alba. The assumption that this poem is a mosaic of shorter poems composed at different times is rejected. Garcilaso does, however, attribute to his protagonist experiences from his own emotional life, "recapitulando en cierto modo su *lfrica anterior*" (p. 109). *Egloga II* presents the characteristics of what Garcilaso's poetry is to be from that time on: "poesía sabia, llena de reminiscencias cultas reelaboradas, dotada de exquisito sentido de la plasticidad y la armonía" (p. 117).

The third chapter is entitled "La Plenitud." In this period Garcilaso has achieved spiritual peace and Naples has become almost a second home. "Las ninfas del Sebeto invitan a cultivar la poesía" (p. 119). Then comes the news of Elisa's death. The intensity of the emotion, expressed through an art now completely mastered, produces the most powerful and beautiful poems of Garcilaso, the "poemas *In Morte*." The predominant influences are Virgil-Sannazaro and Petrarch. The interplay of personal emotion and literary reminiscences in Sonnets XXV and X is admirably treated. (Sonnet X was not necessarily inspired by Elisa's death.)

The analysis of *Egloga I* touches on, but does not attempt to solve, the important problem of Garcilaso's attitude toward the Christian faith in which he was reared. Speaking of the "desdoblamiento" of the poet into Salicio and Nemoroso, Sr. Lapesa says: "Un sugestivo ensayo de Marañón [in *Elogio y nostalgia de Toledo*] considera este desdoblamiento como síntoma revelador de un alma distendida en contradicciones. . . . La duplicidad Salicio-Nemoroso iría unida a otros contrastes que ofrece la figura del poeta: casado . . . y enamorado de Isabel Freyre; partidario de Carlos V y hermano de un comunero; seguramente ortodoxo, pero con posibles concesiones al erasmismo. Ahora bien: Garcilaso, cualesquiera que fuesen los conductos que enlazarán las cavernas de su yo profundo con la polarización de sus sentimientos en los dos pastores, continuó con ella una tradición literaria preexistente" (pp. 124-125). In a letter to me which I quote with his permission, he clarifies his position: ". . . el pretendido paganismo . . . es, cuando menos, término equívoco: exacto en cuanto a preferencias temáticas . . . , admisible en cuanto a ciertas actitudes vitales . . . , pero absolutamente falso si con 'paganismo' se quiere dar a entender un abandono consciente e intencionado de esa ideología y de esa moral [católicas]. . . . Sin cristianismo no se hubieran escrito los maravillosos tercetos del soneto XXV. . . ."

Doubts concerning the unity of conception of *Egloga I* are rejected, with arguments which are convincing to this reviewer. In this poem Garcilaso achieves the creation of "un lenguaje y un mundo poético nuevos" (p. 143). There follow a study of the *Epístola a Boscán*, *Elegía*



*I*, and the ode *A la Flor de Gnido*, each of which inaugurated a new genre in Spanish poetry; a closely reasoned analysis of "la aventura napolitana"; a consideration of Sonnets XXIII, XXIX, XI, XIII, all of Classical inspiration; and an examination of *Egloga III*, in which Garcilaso's technical mastery is at its highest. After the "conclusión," the book ends with "Apéndice I" which provides the chronology of the poems, and "Apéndice II" which treats of "cuestiones de atribución."

*La trayectoria poética de Garcilaso* is not a full and final study of the poet, whose ideological world requires reexamination in the light of Renaissance thought—a *Weltanschauung* which is much better understood today than in 1930, when Margot Arce Blanco published her *Garcilaso de la Vega*. As has been seen, Sr. Lapesa was concerned with other problems. The problems which did concern him he has solved admirably, and he has greatly enriched his readers by so doing.

OTIS H. GREEN

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*Cervantes, Tirso y el Perú*. By Aurelio Miró Quesada Sosa. Editorial Huascarán, Lima, 1948: 217 pages.

In this study the author has traced the allusions to Peru, and its occurrence as subject matter, throughout the works of Cervantes and Tirso de Molina. That so much ground could be covered in actually only part of so modest a book is perhaps some indication that, except for a significant dramatic trilogy of Tirso, these allusions and occurrences do not rise much above the perfunctory commonplaces that characterize the conception of the New World fostered by *siglo de oro* literature. (Cf. Marcos Morfnigo, *América en el teatro de Lope de Vega*, and Sr. Miró's book of the same title.)

Of the two sections that make up this volume, the first, "Cervantes y el Perú," is a reprint of articles published in *El Comercio* of Lima in 1947. It is praiseworthy for its comprehensiveness and critical evaluation, for its clarity and amenity, and for its tactful instruction of an unscholarly public in bio-bibliographical material. Its disproportionate preliminaries provide a first-rate survey of essential background data. In summary: ". . . De soñar [Cervantes] en América tenía que hacerlo sólo como una imprecisa resonancia; como el contrapunto del Imperio español; como el fabuloso Imperio de las Indias, que servía . . . a fin de que el Sol nunca se pusiera en sus vastos dominios."

Sr. Miró Quesada's most valuable contribution is his appreciable amplification of notes on the intangible Peruvian writers listed in *La Galatea*, whose "Canto de Calfope" includes *noticias* of literary life in Peru extraordinary for their precision and number. To earlier explanations (Riva Agüero, Porras) for such an astonishing phenomenon—not a single book was published by any of the poets mentioned except Enrique Garcés, whose translations did not appear until eight years later—Miró

Quesada would plausibly add the personal interest stimulated by Cervantes' project of transference to the New World, not definitely frustrated until 1590. By the same token but in reverse, one might, I think, interpret the uniquely vituperative passage on the Indies in *El celoso extremeño* ("... refugio y amparo de los desesperados de España, etc.") as to some extent an expression of personal disappointment. The relative lack of interest in American writers displayed in *El viaje del Parnaso* (ed. Schevill-Bonilla, IV, 448-459) would, then, be the third and anticlimactic act in this ideological drama. (On the earlier date of the *Novelas ejemplares*, see Schevill-Bonilla, III, 401.) Miró Quesada would have done well had he given his readers some idea of Cervantes' ill-concealed disillusion by quoting, in addition to the single tercet mentioning only his friend Montes de Oca (unannotated by Rodríguez Marín) and the author of *La Araucana*, Apollo's pertinent charge to these poets:

. . . A entrambos toca  
defender esta vuestra rica estancia  
de la canalla de vergüenza poca,  
la cual, de error armada y de arrogancia,  
quiere canonizar y dar renombre  
inmortal y divino a la ignorancia;  
que tanto puede la afición que un hombre  
tiene a sí mismo, que ignorante siendo,  
de buen poeta quiere alcanzar renombre.

This seems to smack more of specific and immediate allusion than of hypothetical generality.

"El Perú en la obra de Tirso de Molina," the second part of this book (71 pages), is the address delivered by the author upon his admission into the Academia Peruana de la Lengua (1948). As befitted such an audience, the treatment here is less popular than that accorded the analogous and less original material on Cervantes, and the chronological procedure accentuates general topics rather than individual works. The sections "Referencias a América," "Voces americanas," and "Viajes, flotas e indios," valuable for the custombristic minutiae, are also commendable for their partial realization of the fact that an author's ideology changes with his progressive experiences. These allusions and comments differ from those found in Lope and Cervantes by incisively reflecting Tirso's personal experience rather than common opinion. However, the ambient is the fruit of his sojourn in Santo Domingo—Caribbean rather than Mexican or Peruvian.

One would expect some analogous "notas amenas" in *Cigarrales de Toledo*, published only three years after Tirso's return to Spain in 1618 and not long after *La villana de Vallecas* (1620), "nutrida—como ninguna de las [comedias] de Tirso de alusiones al regreso de América," but none are cited. If there are none in the *Cigarrales* and its three interpolated plays, or in *Deleitar aprovechando* (finished Feb. 26, 1632), such temporary lack of interest is negative evidence of considerable importance and com-

pels attention. The Pizarro trilogy, unquestionably composed to commemorate a genealogical occasion in 1631, is, however, not an isolated phenomenon. It evidently embodied a renewed impetus toward that "interés verdaderamente extraordinario" which Tirso's autograph *Historia general de la Orden de Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes* (now for the first time in press) displays "no sólo en su segura información, sino . . . [en] la invariable rotundidad de sus conceptos en lo que se relaciona con la vida peruana." The *Historia*, constantly glorifying the Spanish conquest but often adverse to the second generation of domination, becomes passionately polemic, it would seem, in speaking of the Pizarros and the civil wars of Peru; but, according to Miró Quesada (p. 148), Tirso therein denies "mañosamente" the parentage of the three Pizarro plays (printed 1635) by declaring that certain "historias . . . impresas" of "prodigiosos" men of Trujillo do not belong to him. His dramatization of the deeds of the Pizarros might indeed seem something of an understatement as compared with the still more partial, vigorous and incisive position he apparently assumes later as he endeavors to confirm his historical integrity; but at its time of composition it was, in any event, "otro aspecto decisivo, de líneas más robustas y de más hondos caracteres humanos," and so, since the trilogy deals with Peru in particular and not with the New World in general, Miró Quesada properly accords it major and climactic consideration (some 33 pages).

The statement that in the Pizarro trilogy, particularly in *Amazonas en las Indias*, Tirso distinguishes himself from contemporary dramatists by the informed partiality, conviction and passion with which, for the first time in the theatre, he presents "no un motivo episódico sino un personaje concreto: el Perú . . . el Perú como problema hondo, el Perú trascendente y esperanzado quehacer" (pp. 186-187; cf. 158, 164) embodies, I think, an exaggerated estimate of his literary achievement, and perhaps a misleading, though suggestive, conception of his dramatic purpose. But his relative superiority in expressing an opinion "tan redonda y tan firme"—a noteworthy manifestation of what to me is his most striking characteristic: his intensity—is undeniable.

Tirso's complete and intimate acquaintance with the early chroniclers of the Indies is confirmed in such detail as to leave little doubt that he utilized Zárate's *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú*, the Inca Garcilaso's *Segunda parte de los Comentarios reales*, and possibly Francisco Pizarro's missing second will. Miró Quesada need not, however, have assumed that this contradicts or invalidates the conclusions of Otis H. Green's historically more penetrating analysis (see *HR*; 1936, IV, 201-225) as regards either the trilogy's logically dominant source or its panegyric character, the latter being duly (but somewhat inconsistently) accepted by Miró Quesada elsewhere (pp. 176, 177, 180). The discrepancies (one or possibly two, not four) noted between Tirso and Pizarro y Orellana's *Varones ilustres del Nuevo Mundo*—to Green the only known

source for the defense necessary to vindicate the Pizarro name (*loc. cit.*, p. 203)—are too trivial and too readily misinterpreted to warrant declaration that “No de otro modo se explican ciertas reveladoras referencias en las obras de Tirso” (p. 173) than by the hypothesis not of “una relación de dependencia” but of “obras paralelas” and some common source for both, presumably the Inca Garcilaso, later qualified (p. 177) as “la única fuente que convenía a Tirso.” Tirso seems, rather, to have constructed his case eclectically, and perhaps unscrupulously as well as inconsistently, from whatever material he could find to reenforce his position as advocate. Green has adequately recognized Tirso’s debt to Garcilaso for other elements as well as for Carvajal’s notorious arguments urging Gonzalo Pizarro to make himself King of Peru, but treats it as a matter of secondary importance. The inconsistent injustice of regarding such evidence as grounds for excluding other influences is demonstrated by Miró Quesada’s argument for “la huella de Zárate” (pp. 173–174), with whom, moreover, detailed collation reveals several superior points of contact that have not been noticed. On the other hand, a still stronger case than that presented can be made for Tirso’s almost inevitable knowledge and use of Garcilaso. For instance, the *fineza* with which Gonzalo Pizarro was received on returning from the *jornada de la canela* (*Amazonas*, ed. Cotarelo, 564a)—part of the very passage in which Miró Quesada sees some Zárate influence—is a bit which is lacking in the older authority but which Garcilaso had heard from first-hand witnesses: “Hasta aquí es de Çarate, donde falta lo que sigue . . .” (II, III, xv).

The frequent omission of essential data in the selective bibliography makes critical evaluation of this work, and further research on an attractive subject, unnecessarily difficult.

C. E. ANIBAL

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*Novelas amorosas y ejemplares de doña María de Zayas y Sotomayor.*

Edición y prólogo de Agustín G. de Amezúa. (Real Academia Española, Biblioteca Selecta de Clásicos Españoles, Serie II, Vol. VII.) Madrid, 1948: 1 + 426 pages.

The monumental undertaking of Menéndez y Pelayo to study the *orígenes de la novela* has left us four volumes of critical commentary and textual reprints as a solid basis on which to construct the history of Spanish fiction in the *siglo de oro*. Unfortunately, his comprehensive survey was interrupted before it could reach into the seventeenth century, the period of richest development in the novel. Subsequently there have been several attempts to supplement the great critic’s accomplishment, but none of them has succeeded in filling the immense gap that still hinders our knowledge of the subject. At the present time it is well-nigh impossible to locate and read all of the prose narratives written by contemporaries of Cervantes and Lope de Vega. Scholars in the Hispanic field are grateful, therefore, for any contribution toward making scarce works more readily available.



The present edition is based on the text of the *primera parte* published in Zaragoza, 1637. As it happens, however, the *novelas* of Zayas are among the best known, since they have been reprinted many times. It is to be hoped that other authors, long neglected, will also find a place in the new series represented by the volume under review. One can think of a dozen romances preserved only in the original edition which deserve to be presented in the same attractive format.

Few editors are as well equipped as Sr. Amezáa for collaborating in this enterprise sponsored by the Real Academia Española. His familiarity with the whole range of Spanish prose fiction of the seventeenth century has been demonstrated in his discourse on the *Formación y elementos de la novela cortesana* (Madrid, 1929). But he has nothing new to present concerning doña María de Zayas, and to compensate for this disappointment he writes a discursive introduction devoted mainly to praise of her talents. While attempting to minimize her indebtedness to other storytellers, especially Italian predecessors, he strongly argues that she drew upon reality for her plots and subject matter. In view of the fact that it was commonplace at the time for authors to lend verisimilitude to their tales by pretending that they were based on actual events, there is little reason to give special significance to Zayas' claim to truthfulness. Consequently Sr. Amezáa becomes involved in an unconvincing theory which all but leads him into self-contradiction. Granted that almost anything could and did happen in those days of frenzied activity, it would be a poor artist who cherished historical accuracy above the adornment of imagination. As Celestina shrewdly remarked to the youthful Pármeneo, "El deleyte es con los amigos en las cosas sensuales é especial en recontar las cosas de amores é comunicarlas." Moreover, nothing is to be gained by an apology for the ribald nature of some episodes related by doña María. It is enough to say that her writings have provided popular entertainment for over three centuries.

Sr. Amezáa's most substantial service is to be sought in the Apéndice Bibliográfico. His method here is to make a composite list of all editions and translations that he has seen and those cited by other compilers. It is questionable whether some of the items have ever existed. Until someone accurately describes an edition and tells where a copy is to be found, it might better be omitted from a formal bibliography. Besides the single examples given of the Zaragoza, 1637, printings, other copies are owned by the Vienna National Library, the Bibliothéque Nationale and the Arsenal Library in Paris, the British Museum, and the Hispanic Society of America. Presumably the date (1657) of the first edition of the *Parte Segunda* is a misprint for 1647. Possibly there were two editions in the latter year, for the catalogue of the Vatican Library lists one printed in Zaragoza, En el Hospital Real, 1647 (R. G. Est. IV. 288). The only authority for a Barcelona, 1648, edition of both parts is Miss Sylvania, who stated that a copy existed in the British Museum. Neither



Miss Bourland nor I could locate it there, however, and so I assume that this is an error. The edition by Melchor Sánchez (Madrid, 1659), for which Salvá is given as the only authority, is extant in several copies. Miss Bourland lists it under the shelf mark R 16681 at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, and I have consulted it also at the Hispanic Society of America, the British Museum, and libraries in Munich and Vienna. Miss Bourland describes the Hispanic Society copy of the edition by Pablo Campins (Barcelona, 1734) for which only Palau is cited. I possess a copy of an edition by María Angela Martí, Barcelona, 1764. Probably it is the one for which Sr. Amezúa gives (1763?). If so, the number of pages should be 536 instead of 356. Miss Bourland also describes a copy from the Biblioteca Nacional. An adaptation of "La burlada Aminta" appeared under a different title in *La floresta española* (London, 1807, pp. 41-51). Also "El castigo de la miseria" was included among the selections from *Novelistas del siglo XVII*, Barcelona, Biblioteca Clásica Española, 1884.

A considerable amount of comparative research needs to be done in order to trace the influence of Zayas in France and England. Although the bibliography of Scarron's translations is complicated, it is hardly sufficient to refer the reader to Brunet's *Manuel*. A more recent and accurate source would be the work of E. Magne. English versions of Scarron are important, particularly those by John Davies. As Hainsworth has observed, not all of the originals of d'Ouville's translation (Paris, 1656) were from Zayas. He also lists French versions of her works in *Les nouvelles héroïques et amoureuses* of Boisrobert (Paris, 1657), *Journal étranger* (1757) and *Nouvelles espagnoles* by d'Ussieux (1772). There were two editions of Vanel's translation in 1680, both represented by copies in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

In England Captain John Stevens published a translation of "La esclava de su amante" under the title of "A Letter from Madrid" in *The British Mercury* (December 31, 1712-January 28, 1713). His version of other novels by Zayas in *A Week's Entertainment at a Wedding* (London, 1710) has been noted by Miss Bourland. Incidentally the same collection had been issued in the previous year as *The Diverting Works of Miguel de Cervantes*.

The following editions, which I have consulted, should be added to Sr. Amezúa's bibliography:

Spanish: Barcelona, Joseph Giralt, n.d.

Paris, 1848 (Four novels of Zayas included with Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares* in "Colección de los mejores autores españoles," Tomo II).

Barcelona, Editorial Apolo, 1940 (*Aventurarse perdiendo* and *Estragos que causa el vicio*).

French: Paris, A. Lemmens, 1711.

ROBERT H. WILLIAMS

University of Texas

*Pérez Galdós. Spanish Liberal Crusader.* By H. Chonon Berkowitz. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1948: xi + 499 pages + 7 plates.

In December, 1944 it became known that Berkowitz had at last placed the fruits of his labors of a decade and a half, the completed manuscript of his Galdós biography, in the hands of his publisher—an act carried out days before blindness overcame him and only a few weeks before his untimely death. Hispanists have ever since eagerly awaited the publication of his *Pérez Galdós*.

If this is not the great book anticipated, it is an awe-inspiring and overwhelming one. The magnitude of the biographer's achievement is hard to measure; the life of no modern Spanish author has received such intensive and extensive treatment. The book is vast and encyclopedic in scope and intimate in focus; it teems with both details and generalities. Although it is not literary criticism, literary values are suggested throughout—incidentally but frequently. The impression grows that Berkowitz had discovered and read everything written by and about Don Benito and that other private confidential sources, many of them no longer in existence, had been more fully tapped than would ever be possible again. It is hardly necessary to say that all previous biographical studies have been fully utilized and may now be considered, singly or together, completely superseded. For years since 1931, when a Guggenheim grant had enabled him to investigate sources of information in Las Palmas, Madrid, and Santander, Berkowitz had been urged by Galdós' daughter and her husband to get on with their father's biography, for "usted es," as a letter of July 21, 1933 runs, "a nuestro parecer el único bien documentado para realizar esta labor, mejor dicho, publicarla, puesto que ya la tiene realizada."

Two considerations make it impossible and unfruitful to judge this book privately or to review it publicly in a manner commonly employed by scientific scholarship. The first consideration lies in the unverifiable nature of the personal and unprinted data supplied by Galdós' friends and members of his family and household, whose generous cooperation Berkowitz appreciatively acknowledges (vi-vii). The truth of much of this book must therefore be accepted on faith—on confidence in the soundness and integrity of Berkowitz's work as demonstrated earlier and often. Other material in the book can be checked, and to the extent that this has been possible, it has been found<sup>1</sup> that indubitable errors of factual statement are remarkably few and insignificant. The death of the author must also be considered in determining the nature of criticism. Berkowitz neither saw his book through the press himself nor is able to answer or meet criticism in any way, and a revised edition is out of the question.

<sup>1</sup> Through the courtesy of Mrs. H. C. Berkowitz, files of the biographer's notes are in the possession of the reviewer; microfilm copies are held by the University of Wisconsin library.

The volume consists of twenty highly readable chapters, followed by a substantial section of "Notes and References" and an Index, and is illustrated with three full-page photographs of Galdós, one of his birthplace in Las Palmas, another of his Santander home, and two of non-literary art work done in his youth. The text is at times amusing and racy, reminiscent of an earlier *humorismo* of the author, perhaps occasionally purple and flamboyant, but never dull.

The first three chapters (I-III), dealing with family background and carrying Galdós through his first years in Madrid to 1869, are not only unmatched but wholly beyond comparison with any previous work except some of Berkowitz's own short studies. Besides an account of Galdós' forebears and collateral descendants, I contains portraits of his parents, especially his mother of dominant personality, never before so exposed to the light, although Mesa had brought her out slightly<sup>2</sup> and Berkowitz himself had prepared a paper on Mamá Dolores for the MLA meeting of 1944, his last and unpublished work. II tells the story of young Benito's life from birth—the youngest of ten children and of five boys, not four as Olmet and García Carraffa stated<sup>3</sup>—to his leaving home in 1862, recounting circumstances and details of his long nursing period, his education at the Migas school and the Colegio de San Agustín, his many varied forms of artistic indulgence—paper figures, music, drawing, painting, carving, and of course writing, a clear picture being presented of all that is known of Galdós' juvenilia, both published and unpublished. III deals with the years 1862-69 in Madrid, his family and other associates, especially the help from his sister-in-law Madrina, his student and journalistic activities,<sup>4</sup> two trips to France and a visit home, his indulgence in Madrid café and theatrical life, his own playwriting, avid reading, and "spiritual hygiene" (58), as he called his strolling about the city.

IV goes back to Galdós' days of assiduous study in the Ateneo library and his visits to Gerona and Zaragoza and continues through the publication of *La Fontana de Oro*, financed by Madrina, who later also helped with the illustrated edition of the *Episodios* and the Santander home San Quintín (XII, 242, 243). Although he does not give his reasons, it is clear that Berkowitz is following Galdós when he assigns to *La Sombra* the number one chronological position (over *La Fontana de Oro*) in the order of his fictional writings.<sup>5</sup>

In what Berkowitz calls a cataleptic or trance period (1870-73), Galdós' great idea of "reforming the national conscience" (93 and *passim*

<sup>2</sup> Rafael de Mesa, *Don Benito Pérez Galdós. Su familia. Sus mocedades. Su senectud*, Madrid, 1920, pp. 10-27.

<sup>3</sup> Luis Antón del Olmet y Arturo García Carraffa, *Galdós*, Madrid, 1912, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Berkowitz gives the impression (p. 69) that Galdós became editor-in-chief of *La Revista de España* in 1870, when in fact he did not assume the job of "Director" until February, 1872. Cf. W. H. Shoemaker, in Benito Pérez Galdós, *Crónica de la quincena*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1948, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Galdós' foreword, dated "Junio de 1890," to *La Sombra, Celn, Tropiquillos, Theros*, first published in 1890.

*subter*) was born (V: "The Great Decision"), and he set out, with *Trafalgar*, on "his patriotic, artistic,—and financial—enterprise" (99-100). In VI the chronological treatment is interrupted by an exposition of Galdós' "creative process," which becomes "a reconstruction of his method and routine" (105). Many persons and events are identified as the models of novelistic creations (also *passim*, and especially XV); sources of Galdós' information, both documentary and personal, are revealed; his habits in "doodling," proof-reading and correcting are described. If this chapter proves unsatisfying, it is because too many imponderables and unknowns confronted the biographer; some will regret and deny that "this is all that can be said of Galdós' creative process" (118), but they must nevertheless remain eternally grateful for the fascinating collection of data on the author's behavior and procedures, comprising largely new and little-known facts. Many are the debatable and speculative points which the biographer's boldness in such a chapter as this inevitably arouses. It may, to name a single example, seriously be doubted that "this artistic sin [of verbosity and diffuseness] had forced him to abandon the short story fairly early in his career" (116), for there is no evidence that Galdós had ever had any fondness for that form of fiction at any time in his career or that he had ever done much more than perform journalistic stints—requirements or requests—throughout his life.

In VII Berkowitz discusses the *Episodios* and their contemporary critics, the Bourbon restoration and the social novels of the '70's. The leanness of the year 1879 is noted without explanation (149 ff.). Berkowitz implies that from the time Galdós began the *novelas*, the *Episodios* were continued "in deference to his conscience, his financial needs, and his readers" (136). But it has not been shown that the *Episodios* written after the start of *Doña Perfecta*—the last seven volumes of the second series—are inferior in imaginative power, or in any other way, to the earlier ones—an expected corollary to such a shift in exclusive interest as the one suggested. VIII considers the foreign translations of the early novels and *Episodios* and discusses the first two *novelas contemporáneas*, carrying Galdós to the "National Recognition" (151) which the double banquet in his honor in 1883 signified. "The Widening Horizon" (IX) embraces more translations and especially his travels, in a disproportionately long account, particularly the pages devoted to Italy, in which the biographer for the most part simply digests Galdós' articles. Included is the little-known fact that Pope Leo XIII granted "the apostolic benediction and plenary indulgence in *articulo mortis* . . . to 'Benito Pérez Galdós de Canarias' and to all the consanguineously and otherwise related members of his family up to the third degree" (189). Berkowitz claims that these extensive travels—Toledo, England, Portugal, Germany, and Italy—contributed to the formation of Galdós' "far-reaching vision" and the discovery "for himself [of] an ever-wider world"—from "concern



with Spanish problems" to "an ever-growing interest in the essence of humanity" (195; reiterated 214). Galdós' vision and larger interest are facts indeed but that their growth is due to his travels is not demonstrated and will not readily be taken for granted by such critics as Sainz, who says bluntly, "Fueron viajes para presumir."<sup>6</sup>

In X ("Cradle' Politics") Berkowitz offers a plausible explanation—speculative but closely reasoned on the available data—of why and how Galdós came to accept his innocuous but apparently self-betraying rôle as a *cunero sagastino*. XI considers the period of his novels from *Tormento* through *Realidad*, his election and entrance into the Academy and something of his later relations with this august body. The reasons for the latter's refusal to endorse Galdós' candidacy for the Nobel Prize are disconcertingly different here (235) from those offered later (XVIII, 417). As preliminary to Galdós' "Dramatic Début" (XII) with *Realidad*, Berkowitz discusses the low state of the drama and theater in Spain at the time. Galdós was impelled to enter such a disheartening arena, not only as a part of his mission of literary and patriotic reformation, but because of financial strain caused by his irregular private life. Subsequent litigation with his publishing partner involved bitter charges by Galdós (XV, 325-327), not thoroughly proved but unhappily paralleled at least twice later, in 1912 (XVIII, 419) and 1914-16 (XVIII, 427-430). The rest of Galdós' plays of the '90's, with the huge amount of contemporaneous critical commentary they aroused, particularly as affecting the reputation of their author, form the substance of XVIII. Especially notable was the constant support of Echegaray, comparable with that of Benavente in the next decade and later.

In 1894 Galdós made his only return to his Las Palmas home after the brief visit of 1869. The highly original XIV is crowded with facts and picturesque tales of the three weeks and a day (October 18-November 9: pp. 299, 303), not "almost three pleasant weeks" (299), he spent in his native city. Berkowitz explains that Galdós' failure to renew home ties for twenty-five years lay in the influence of his mother and that of his equally strong-willed sister-in-law, influences which coincided although rooted in different reasons, Mamá Dolores thinking her son should not interrupt his work and Madrina eager as always to keep Benito from a place of odious and unhappy memory. This interpretation then removes support for the idea that Galdós "obviously remained indifferent toward his fellow-countrymen" (296). Further refutation of his non sequitur Berkowitz himself provides in abundance in pointing to the Las Palmas dictionary Galdós was compiling (295), the "native residue" claimed to be in all his works (300), and the many Canarian friends and associates Galdós had all his life, his constant affection for his homeland, and the steady pride and admiration Canarians felt for him.

<sup>6</sup> Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, *Obras completas de Don Benito Pérez Galdós*, Vol. I (Aguilar, Madrid, 1941), xxxix-b.



"Spirituality and Solvency" (XV) deals with the novels of the '90's and their critical and public reception, Galdós' personal theatrical tour with his repertory of plays in 1896, his business litigation, and his resumption of the *Episodios*. Berkowitz opens the chapter thus: "Although the struggle that marked the first years of his dramatic career absorbed most of his artistic and spiritual energies, Galdós found time to carry forward his new vision of life in a series of novels" (312; italics mine). To this absorption Berkowitz attributes the brevity and reputed weakness of *Tristana*. But many will disagree with the thesis, for these years do in fact embrace many novels (11 volumes), some of them indisputably among his best—certainly *Angel Guerra*, the Torquemada series, *Misericordia* (7 volumes in all), which show quite the opposite of artistic or spiritual decline. Even if it be admitted that Galdós' "dramatic ambition far outweighed his other aspirations" (316), it still may be suspected that the biographer was unduly swayed in his judgment by the far greater amount of journalistic material he found in connection with practical arrangements, rehearsals and performances of the plays. These are externals and neither they nor even ambitions have anything necessarily to do with the artistic and the spiritual. Perhaps the same influence caused Berkowitz to exalt Galdós' plays above his novels throughout the book; witness, for example, the small attention of a scant half page accorded *Misericordia* compared with the nearly four pages devoted to *El abuelo* (329-333).

Galdós' most spectacularly successful play *Electra* marks his "Apotheosis" (XVI). Berkowitz presents an amazing abundance of detail, only a part of which can be termed biographical. Galdós was praised by virtually the entire generation of 1898—Maestu, Baroja, Azorín, Bello, Valle-Inclán (350-351, 364 ff.). And Martínez Sierra, Benavente, Angel Guerra, and others hailed Don Benito and his newest drama. An admirably successful effort is made to explain the complex of motives Galdós had in entering upon his "Republican Interlude" (XVII), his declining enthusiasm later, and finally his reconciliation with the monarchy. Foremost among the motives was "the eradication of 'clerical barbarism'" (390). His profession of new republican faith, made in an open letter to Alfredo Vicenti of *El Liberal*, may be read complete elsewhere.<sup>7</sup>

The last three chapters treat the last eight years of Galdós' life, from the two unsuccessful operations for cataracts, through the failure of the Nobel Prize campaign and the meager success of the national subscription for him in 1914, to the last attacks of uremia and death. The pathetic sadness of these years which grew as blindness, sickness, and senility broke strong traits of personality and character was alleviated by many—almost continuous—manifestations of affection and devotion, which

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Galdós' letter of April 18, 1908 to Miss Bushee, in Ada M. Coe, "An Unpublished Letter from Pérez Galdós," *HR*, 1946, XIV, 340-342.

<sup>8</sup> Olmet, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-118.

should perhaps be more strongly emphasized. Through Julio Burell, Minister of Public Instruction, Galdós received a royal appointment in 1916 as his "Auxiliar Delegate," charged "with the arrangements for the Cervantes tercentenary at a monthly stipend of one thousand pesetas" (430), an appointment which was never revoked although the World War forced the cancellation of plans for the celebration. Galdós' un-failing "optimism, faith, and spiritual youthfulness" (433) well merited the loyalty of his many friends—of his own age and younger. The attentions of his daughter María were of an exemplary constancy. Visits of mourners before and during the funeral involved some seventy thousand persons.

Errors in the rich and compact bibliographical detail of the twenty pages of Notes and References (463-482) are so few and so relatively insignificant that they will remain unmentioned here. Also, such slips and omissions as are discovered in the fifteen-page Index can hardly detract from the utility of this anonymous labor of love as a reference tool for the consultant.

The importance of love and sex in Galdós' life, although still largely veiled, is accorded a hitherto unmentioned significance. His boyhood sweetheart, the illegitimate Sisita, was driven from Las Palmas by Mamá Dolores partly because of her maternal concern for Benito. Berkowitz wonders "if love it really was" (95), but reports that Sisita's leaving caused in him a near emotional crisis, that he was shocked later at the news both of her marriage in Cuba and of her early death, and that the fictional characters Clara (*La Fontana de Oro*) and Inés (*Episodios*, 1st series) are both based on Sisita.<sup>9</sup> His "one great love" (111) may probably be identified with Juanita Lund (146), and the elderly Teodosia Gandarias (437) is probably his last sweetheart, who died, according to a letter to Ortega Munilla published in *Hoy* (January 9, 1920), just three days before Galdós himself.

It has steadily been claimed that in his boyhood Galdós attended an English school; Berkowitz claims there was no such school. Although he does not give his authority, an examination of his file of notes leads to the conclusion that the error goes back to El Bachiller Corchuelo, who in 1910 attributed to Galdós himself the statement that his first "escuela . . . fué de un inglés"<sup>10</sup> and that this statement is exposed as incorrect by the Millares article of 1919.<sup>11</sup>

The identity of Galdós' business partner, consistently unnamed from Olmet to Sainz, is revealed to be Miguel H. de la[?] Cámara (243-244,

<sup>9</sup> Cf. María Teresa León, "Una mujer de Galdós que no está en sus novelas," in *Cursos y conferencias*, Año XII, Vol. XXIV, Núm. 139-140-141, Buenos Aires, 1943, pp. 87-97.

<sup>10</sup> El Bachiller Corchuelo, "Nuestros grandes prestigios: Benito Pérez Galdós," *Por Esos Mundos*, 1910, XI, 45.

<sup>11</sup> Millares Cubas, Luis y Agustín, "Pérez Galdós: Recuerdos de su infancia en Las Palmas," *La Lectura*, 1919, XX, 333-352.

325-329). Berkowitz declares that Galdós did not know the cause of the heavy drain on his account and that Cámara was too delicate to tell him. If this explanation remains difficult for human comprehension, it at least fills a time-honored emptiness.

In his "Preface" Berkowitz clearly foresaw that his portrait of Galdós might "startle some" (vi). The sense of shock to many worshipful admirers derives partly from this biography's factual information regarding Galdós' love and sex life, his demanding behavior in times of financial stress, and his use of friends on such occasions, and partly from many of the biographer's vital and verbal interpretations throughout the book. In prolonging the amorous life of youth into old age Galdós was no doubt unusual, but no doubt also some of these experiences—perhaps many, or most—were more romantic than passionate, as in the case of his love affair with Teodosia, the only correspondent in his late years whom Berkowitz names. This "affair" belies the Sainz charge that Galdós loved only "epidérmicamente."<sup>13</sup> A Puritanical judgment is, furthermore and in any case, wholly inappropriate. Galdós was deeply moved when in October, 1916 he attended the rehearsal performance of the Quinteros' dramatization of his *Marianela*. "Under the strain of emotion and possibly *contrition*," interprets Berkowitz, "Nela and Celipín may have seemed like his own children *pointing accusingly at him*" (441; italics mine). This is an unwarranted assumption, so far as is and can now be known. There is not only no knowledge whatever of any instance wherein Galdós failed in his moral obligation, but he was always generous in the extreme, an easy victim of *sablazos* of every kind and from many sources. Ramírez Angel refers<sup>14</sup> to Galdós' clearness of conscience, and González-Rigabert to his tears of *joy* at the *Marianela* performance.<sup>14</sup> Galdós' financial difficulties, coming to the surface, one may note, shortly after Madrina's death in 1894, are attributed to the costliness of his amatory life. While this may be largely true, it would seem that a fair judgment would also credit the very generosity of Galdós' tender and loving nature and the shouldering of moral obligations even when financially exhausting. Berkowitz implies that Galdós started his dramatic career partly for financial reasons (243) and that he interrupted it for the same reasons (280), but justice demands at the same time that Galdós be credited with literary integrity. He never stopped writing novels of several volumes or in series, or bulky single volumes, each containing "a densely packed canvas" (303), even when he knew they sold poorly and was advised to desist by friends, among them literary admirers like *Clarín* and Palacio Valdés (323). Also, if Galdós "used" his friends for financial advancement, one may plead the extenuating circumstance of necessity; if he

<sup>13</sup> Sainz, *op. cit.*, p. xlii-b.

<sup>14</sup> E. Ramírez Angel, "Galdós íntimo: Los últimos años del maestro," *ABC*, January 7, 1923.

<sup>14</sup> F. González-Rigabert, "Los ojos tristes," *El Globo*, October 19, 1916- [italics mine]

abused and took unfair advantage of such relationships, there is not the least sign that any friend was disaffected; on the contrary Don Benito seemed to grow ever richer in this respect.

"Vanity" is a word Berkowitz uses many times to denote a trait of Galdós' character. It is an uncomplimentary and ignoble attribute and cumulatively has a damaging effect on Galdós' current and future reputation far beyond what relative objective exactness the term may have—very little in the opinion of this reviewer and on the basis of the data supplied by Berkowitz himself. For example, the "vanity" of his dreams of the early '70's (90) is nothing but the projection of his child-like, egocentric, and vivid imagination—a vital part of his creative impulse. In the sense that fancy is vain—i.e., unsubstantial and perhaps inconsequential—the word *may* be appropriate, but with the associated connotation of ostentation, conceit, or presumptuousness, which is inevitable and therefore pejorative, it is wholly unjust; whatever the behavior was it was entirely private, without social aspect or "side." Besides such unfortunate emphases as this, the text is also guilty of others through purely verbal infelicity or inaccuracy. If one examines the context of the phrase "by a strange coincidence" (87), one will be hard pressed to find anything either strange or coincidental. "Contrived" conveys a connotation of scheming ingenuity, perhaps appropriate in characterizing his plans to meet Juanita Lund (146) but hardly fitting the arrangement of translation contracts (142). It may seriously be doubted that Galdós and Menéndez y Pelayo really "contended" (231) for the privilege of introducing Pereda to the Academy, much as both may have desired the honor. "Gratuitous," used correctly once (252), is hardly appropriate to Macho's gift of time and artistic skill (446). When Berkowitz writes that even after Galdós' "incessant goading" (439) the Quinteros "had managed to get *only* three acts out of the novel" (442; italics mine), one might conclude that the Quinteros felt injured, of which there is not the slightest indication and many to the contrary, and that they would normally have written four or more acts, which is well known to be untrue.

It is evident that Berkowitz tried insistently and successfully to avoid idolatry and even worship. He missed few opportunities to cut Galdós down to human proportions; there is no pedestal, no sentimentality. Although Berkowitz genuinely believed that Galdós was a great figure, the net result of pejorative emphases and ill-fitting words is to lessen his stature. This might have been inevitable anyway, since the height of his greatness was not in his personal private life nor in his public, political life, but in the inner creativity of the lonely artist-man, the least accessible of subjects to the biographer. Greater development might, however, have been accorded such characteristics as his perennially youthful spirit, which never gave up an "abiding belief in a regenerated fatherland" (400), the warmth that attracted and held hosts of loyal friends throughout his long life, and the fire that breathed the spark of life into several thousand fictional creations.



One cannot help wondering what changes Berkowitz would make, were he alive to prepare a revised edition. To make secure the high and authoritative place this book may so justly claim in most respects, he would doubtless make more consistently clear where the line may be drawn between source and authority on the one hand and interpretation on the other; also, what the nature of the source or authority is—whether oral, or unpublished correspondence, notes, and other documents, or published material, etc. Many individual statements will be challenged by scholars simply because they have not been presented with evidence and proof nor even apprised of the *kind* of evidence that convinced the biographer. To make the evidence of published material really effective, a revision of the "Notes and References" would be made. Many more notes would be added to support the text, some of the items simply being transferred unchanged from the "Reference" section where they are inappropriately located now (e.g., IX, 471: Ghiraldo). Also a general reference section would be included to avoid the many present duplications and to permit abbreviations in the notes. It might then be possible to evaluate such statements, for which now no evidence is offered, as the following: "Galdós fell into a fit of skepticism" (83); he had "an almost pathological craving for recognition in France" (217; cf. also 174); "Galdós did not regard it [*Miau*] as anything noteworthy" (222; cf. also 220: "he was aware"; 224: "he reached the conclusion"); Galdós "figured" (264), "could not help feeling" (269), "recalled" (271), "in his own conscience . . . never admitted" (280), and "became obsessed" (281). In any case, simple changes of the sort suggested in the method of presentation and entry would assure for the book as ready and faithful an acceptance in the generations to come as the full and frank, challenging and stimulating, unprecedented and unequalled picture of the "Liberal Crusader" richly deserves and will certainly have among Berkowitz's scholarly contemporaries today.

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## BRIEFER MENTION

*Del virgilianismo de Garcilaso de la Vega.* Por Manuel Alcalá. México, 1946: 48 páginas.

*Ausias March y Garcilaso de la Vega, poetas del dolorido amar.* Por María del Pilar Arrando. México, 1948: 170 páginas.

Sin entrar en el pormenor de los recuerdos concretos, el Sr. Alcalá trata de precisar en qué y hasta qué punto es virgiliana la inspiración de Garcilaso. Para ello analiza, generalmente con acierto, las semejanzas y diferencias que ofrecen entre sí los dos poetas en temas y en actitudes espirituales. Según el Sr. Alcalá son virgilianos en Garcilaso "su romanticismo tierno y melancólico que se esfuerza en dominar con una forma clásica, su don de lágrimas, su manera de concebir el hado; virgiliana la esencia misma de su obra: el amor; virgilianos, en fin, su pacifismo y su espíritu dramático. Queda, en cambio, fuera del virgilianismo porque no tiene ni espíritu religioso ni espíritu épico, y carece, además, del fuerte y amplio sentimiento patriótico de Virgilio" (pág. 46). Probablemente son demasiado tajantes las negaciones de este último párrafo; no nos satisface la aplicación del término "romanticismo" para designar una categoría estética permanente; y creemos que alguno de los rasgos que en el pasaje citado se dan como virgilianos responden en Garcilaso, parcialmente al menos, a la tradición literaria del amor cortés, y especialmente al influjo petrarquesco. Pero con estas reservas nos parecen correctas las conclusiones del Sr. Alcalá, quien, además, logra dar a su estudio claridad y belleza expositiva. Lamento no haberlo conocido antes.

El trabajo de la Sra. Arrando demuestra la familiaridad de Garcilaso con la obra de Ausias March, y cita buen número de reminiscencias precisas no señaladas antes. Coincide en este punto varias veces con mi reciente libro *La trayectoria poética de Garcilaso*, aparecido en Madrid mientras se imprimía en Méjico el estudio de la Sra. Arrando: las dos aportaciones se corroboran y complementan en cuanto a la indicación de pasajes claramente influidos por March. Ahora bien, la Sra. Arrando trata de restar importancia a la huella de Petrarca sobre Garcilaso para atribuir a costa de ella mayor extensión y hondura al influjo de Ausias March (pág. 32). Creemos que, llevada por este afán, va más allá de lo justo, sobre todo al buscar semejanzas de temas, postura espiritual y procedimiento artístico en casos donde se revela una comunidad de tradición literaria, pero no una relación directa entre los dos poetas. Aparte de ello, se echa de menos en el estudio de la Sra. Arrando una disposición más ordenada y conexa. Los apéndices II al V son de muy dudosa utilidad, ya que se limitan a reproducir páginas o datos de diversas monografías.

No hay lugar en esta reseña para discutir detalles en la interpretación de los textos. Los dos estudios que nos ocupan contribuyen a puntualizar el alcance de las influencias literarias en la obra de Garcilaso y ofrecen consideraciones o datos de indudable interés.

RAFAEL LAPESA

*Vida y obra de Medrano.* Por Dámaso Alonso. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, 1948: t. I, 331 págs. y 13 láminas.

De la vida de Francisco de Medrano existían cuatro datos sacados de una carta suya por La Barrera, aun inéditos, y unos pocos más reunidos por Rodríguez Marín en los *Nuevos datos para las biografías de cien escritores de los siglos XVI y XVII*. Dámaso Alonso, que nos había anticipado ya noticias curiosas en su discurso de recepción en la Academia Española—véase reseña en nuestro número de abril de 1948, pág. 187—, nos da ahora más de un centenar de páginas bien nutridas con documentación procedente de varios archivos, y con una interpretación de su carácter. Ha sacado, pues, de las sombras del pasado una figura con aliento vital, y nos ha presentado al hombre—jesuita primero, asegurado después—caminando por la senda de la vida, con el pensamiento y el sentimiento inclinados a la virtud, y el pícaro mundo dándole sus tirones.

De crítica literaria sobre Medrano—aparte las notas sueltas de Luis José Velázquez, Böhl de Faber, Adolfo de Castro, Díez Carbonell, Valbuena Prat, Gerardo Diego y Luis Cernuda—teníamos las páginas que le dedicaba Menéndez y Pelayo en su *Horacio en España* y el breve ensayo de Audrey Lumsden en *Spanish Golden Age Poetry and Drama* (1946). Y ya son, en el nuevo libro, unas doscientas páginas de crítica estilística sobre el viejo poeta sevillano. ¿Cuál es el sentido y valor de esa obra del hasta hoy casi desconocido poeta? Baste una cita: "Dos profundas inteligencias de la oda horaciana ha habido entre nosotros, Fray Luis y Medrano" (pág. 281). Y la crítica de tal obra está hecha con una sagacidad, sensibilidad y finura que no tienen par en las letras de hoy en día.

El segundo tomo, cuando salga, contendrá la obra entera del poeta.

M. R.-N.

*Letras de la Nueva España.* Por Alfonso Reyes. (Colección Tierra Firme, 40.) Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico City-Buenos Aires, 1948: 155 pages.

An early volume of the excellent Tierra Firme collection, written by a recognized authority, Sr. Julio Jiménez Rueda, offered a very useful survey of nineteenth-century Mexican literature together with some of its antecedents. Now, in a work of the same series, the dean of essayists in the neighboring republic presents a review of pre-Cortesian and colonial letters of his country, penned in his customarily graceful and polished style. To an early version of this essay, which appeared in a volume of joint authorship entitled *México y la cultura* (1946), Dr. Reyes has added

four brief chapters on Hispanization, the Chronicle, the missionary theater, and the Creole drama of the sixteenth century, and he has retouched other parts of his original work with the result that the whole forms a more complete picture of the first three centuries of Mexican literature.

In his gallery of literary portraits, the dramatist Ruiz de Alarcón and the poetess, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, quite properly stand out most clearly with justice done, however, in proportionate measure to selected minor writers. In his consideration of the inspired nun it is, perhaps, a little disappointing that no cognizance is taken of the recent discovery of her illegitimate birth, and that its possible importance in interpreting her life and work is disregarded. And this reviewer is a little regretful to observe that, despite much evidence to the contrary, the author still subscribes to the outworn theory that books of fiction had slight circulation in the colony (p. 38); nor can the reviewer agree that the absence of novels in colonial literature was probably attributable to a royal decree of 1531 which attempted to prohibit fiction in the Indies (p. 89). This undeniable lack can be traced, perhaps, more readily to the monopoly of book manufacture and of the sale of this kind of literature exclusively enjoyed by Peninsular printers, and also to the later vogue, popular from Lope de Vega's time, of reading versified *comedias* for pleasure, instead of prose. But this essay, free of pedantry and minutiae, makes agreeable reading, and it will surely win far more converts than the factually erudite manuals are likely to do.

IRVING A. LEONARD

Rafael Landívar's *'Rusticatio Mexicana'* (Mexican Country Scenes).

The Latin text with an Introduction and an English Prose Translation by Graydon W. Regenos. (Philological and Documentary Studies, Vol. I, No. 5, pp. 159-312.) Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, New Orleans, 1948.

The expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain and her colonies in 1767 sent into exile some of the most outstanding humanists of the time. Among the ones who had to leave New Spain were Fathers Xavier Alegre, Clavijero, and Landívar. Victims of court intrigue, these learned Jesuits sought refuge in Italy, where they continued with their literary activities. They were all gifted latinists, who felt as much at home in the language of Virgil as in their own. Banished from their homeland, they tried to evoke and exalt it through historical works.

Landívar expressed his love of homeland in a long Latin poem entitled *Rusticatio Mexicana*. The poem, in Latin hexameters, is divided into fifteen books with a total of over 5,000 lines. These books or cantos describe many bucolic scenes of Mexico in the style of Virgil.

The country scenes described by Landívar are not all to be found in Mexico, but since the people in Europe often used the term Mexico to designate New Spain, "without taking into account the different coun-

tries," Landfvar thought *Rusticatio Mexicana* might be a more easily understood title.

The first book describes the lakes near Mexico City with their floating gardens, flowers, and birds. Others are devoted to volcanoes, waterfalls, mining and processing of metals, sugar growing and refining, livestock, native birds, wild beasts, beavers, indigo dyes, and sports. In these descriptions Landfvar displays imagination and force. Unfortunately the literary merit of Landfvar's work is lost to those unable to appreciate his Latin hexameters. It has been translated into Spanish at least three times in full, and others in part. The first was a prose rendering by Ignacio Loureda, Mexico, 1924. He published the Latin and Spanish texts in parallel columns. A more ambitious version was that of Father Federico de Escobedo, who translated it entirely in verse with the title *Geórgicas Mexicanas* (1925). A prose version by O. Valdés, published by the University of Mexico in 1942, is the most satisfactory and the most readable.

The present English prose translation of *Rusticatio Mexicana* by Mr. Regenos is, so far as I know, the first rendering in this language of Landfvar's poem. The translation follows closely the original text, yet it is in readable English. The Latin poem and translation are published in parallel columns enabling the reader to compare both line for line.

Mr. Regenos acquits himself very well of his task. The spirit of the original is well preserved. The poet adds a few brief notes, placed at the end of each book. The translator renders only the ones in Latin, the others he reproduces in Spanish or French as they appear in the original. I don't see the point of printing the untranslated notes in both parallel columns, unless it be to increase the possible errors. As on page 216 "on trouve" is reproduced "on trouv." There are other misprints, not many. I assume the Latinizing of *Chinampas* to *Chinampus* (p. 169) is also a misprint.

The translator adds at the end a brief index of the important items described in the poem; an improvement not found in any of the Spanish translations. The original has three drawings, two illustrating the working of a mule and water sugar mill, and the third showing the old dance of the *volador*, all of which are described in the text. The Spanish translations omit these illustrations. They are included in the present version.

AGAPITO REY



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